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Mr Holland's latest opus

Review

Art in the age of Aids

Jools takes the crown

Film books special: David Lean, Eisenstein, Palace Pictures

Plus Richard Williams on Eno

Major thrown into new sleaze row as he refuses to condemn six accused

Porter faces £31m bill

MPs vote to keep forces ban on gays

David Hencke and Rebecca Smithers

DAME Shirley Porter, the Tesco heiress, was fighting last night to prevent losing half her fortune to pay a £31 million surcharge after being found guilty of orchestrating the biggest corruption scandal in local government this century.



Porter's pearls

The former Westminster leader landed John Major in a fresh sleaze storm in the Commons after he refused to condemn her and five others accused of gerrymandering the Tories' flagship council at the expense of homeless people.

Her appeal — which must be lodged in 28 days — could take place in the run-up to the next election. Dame Shirley was said to have engaged two firms of accountants and a new barrister to fight the ruling.

Westminster council is expected to announce today that its council house sales programme will be halted because it could be illegal under the findings of John Magill, the district auditor. Ministers will also be forced to announce a review of the inquiry system, set up by the Tories in 1983, after the legal hearing.

Dame Shirley, who left Britain for Tel Aviv in 1991, will be landed with nearly all the £31 million bill because none of the officials and councillors has the means to meet the surcharge under rules which make them "jointly and severally liable" for the misapplied money and losses caused by their unlawful policy, known as the "homes for votes" scandal.

The five, who include her deputy council leader David Weeks and former managing director Bill Phillips, face financial ruin if they have to meet their £5 million share of the bill.

Dame Shirley has a fortune estimated at \$60 million, mainly inherited from shares in Tesco, the firm set up by her father, Sir Jack Cohen. The flamboyant former Westminster leader and friend of Lady Thatcher, has a rich husband, Sir Leslie Porter, a Lyons name, who ran a textile business before chairing Tesco from 1973 to 1985. They live in an exclusive £1.3 million apartment overlooking the Mediterranean in Tel Aviv. Since the 1980s they have donated millions of pounds to charities in Israel through the Porter Foundation, which has funds of about \$20 million and has recently earned income of about £1 million a year.

Both are on the board of governors of Tel Aviv university, where Dame Shirley is planning to build a block in memory of her grandson Daniel Markus, killed in a car accident in 1983. They enjoy the status of temporary residents in Tel Aviv, but still keep a home in Chesham Square, Belgraveia, London. Winters are often spent in Palm Springs, Florida.

The row over the seven-year inquiry — which had

'Of course we're not as similar as we are cracked up to be. We were just both strong women in politics. We were both grocer's daughters, I suppose, but hers was only a corner shop'

— on Lady Thatcher

'Everything I get involved in I seem to end up running'

— on herself

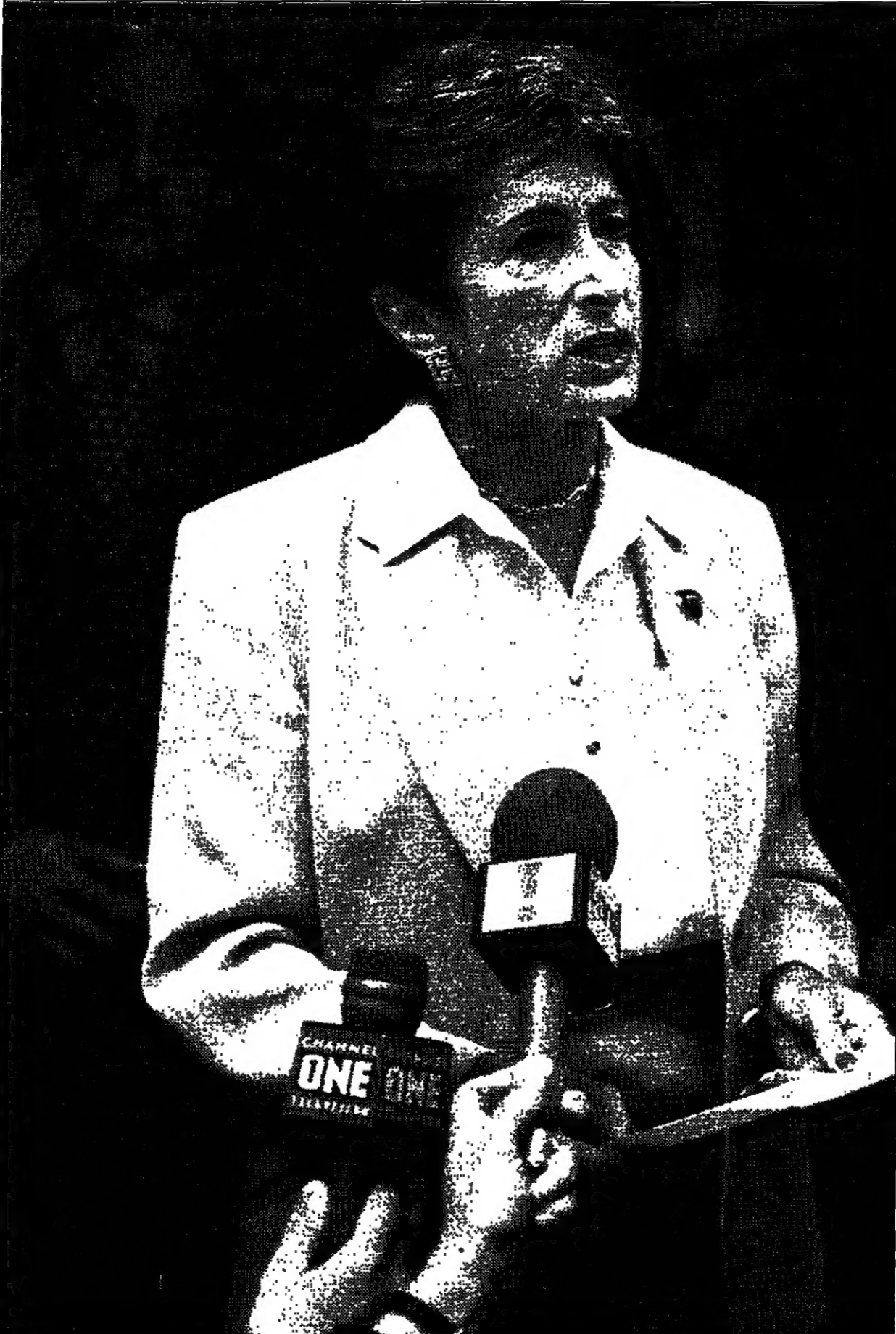
'I must epitomise everything rabid left-wing socialists dislike. They don't like my strength and they don't like my background'

on political opposition

'Local authority work is no longer the polite, cushy, civil service-like profession. It's hard, tough, revolutionary. It's not like council work in Stow-on-the-Wold'

— on claims about her 'reign of terror'

been prolonged by the alleged destruction and withholding of vital evidence by senior officials and Dame Shirley herself — caused mayhem in the Commons. There was fury from the Opposition benches in the Commons after the Prime Minister repeatedly refused to condemn the activities of the six accused until the allegations had been proven in court.



Dame Shirley Porter protests her innocence at her lawyers' chambers in the face of jeers yesterday

Labour leader Tony Blair said it was "contemptible" that Mr Major would not keep his promise to the late Labour leader John Smith in January 1994 that he would "condemn unreservedly" the initial allegations in Mr Magill's interim report, should they subsequently be confirmed.

But Mr Blair said that if Mr Major refused to condemn the actions "of a flagship Conservative council... will it not be crystal clear to the British people that there are no depths to which the Conservative Party will not stoop to gain re-election to any office that it holds?"

Earlier, Dame Shirley had read out a short statement protesting her innocence and insisting that there had been no wrongdoing by the council.

Speaking on the doorstep of her lawyers' Fleet Street chambers, she could barely be heard against the protests of Westminster residents who chanted: "Go back to Israel".

Dame Shirley said she and her former colleagues had been the victim of a kangaroo court.

Mr Magill's investigation has been blatantly unfair," she told reporters. "One man

has been prosecutor, judge and jury. He already prejudged this case two years ago when he pronounced us guilty before hearing our evidence.

De Klerk's withdrawal from Mandela government brings rude end to constitution joy

David Beresford in Cape Town

SOUTH Africa was stunned yesterday by the abrupt withdrawal of the National Party from the coalition government, a decision precipitated by disagreements over the country's new constitution and the growing finan-

cial crisis resulting from the collapse of the rand. The deputy president, F. W. de Klerk, and his six party colleagues on the 27-member cabinet will withdraw from government at the end of next month. The announcement came after a hurried meeting of the National Party's federal council, called to end uncertainty over the issue, which

was seen as a major factor in the battering taken by the South African currency on foreign exchange markets. The rand has lost roughly a quarter of its value since February, eating at the country's gold and foreign exchange reserves. There were indications late yesterday that the party decision by the party could calm the markets.

President Nelson Mandela tried to put a brave face on the blow to his fledgling national unity administration, which came as parliamentarians were still nursing hangovers from late-night celebrations of Wednesday's adoption of a new South African constitution.

Mr Mandela insisted that the National Party pullout could strengthen the country, and that it demonstrated that "our democracy has come of age". He said he was confident that he and Mr De Klerk would continue to work together "in pursuit of our country's interests". Just a few hours earlier, however, he had reacted to predictions of a withdrawal by saying: "I sincerely hope that wise

counsel will prevail and they will remain."

Britain: Nearly half the population are likely to develop wheezing illnesses such as asthma by their early 30s, researchers say. 3

World News: The Congress Party, which once ruled India as a right, faced a general election rout and could be relegated to third place. 2

Finance: Trade Secretary Ian Lang defended his decisions on privatised utility takeovers, but failed to give clear guidelines. 11

Sport: Thousands of supporters who paid for European Championship tickets will have to wait to see if they are genuine. 16

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Prague Writers' Festival 1996

This year the Prague Writers' Festival, directed by Michael March, will once again showcase a selection of fine authors from around the world. Meet them at the Viola Theatre, Narodni 7, (nearest metro Narodni) from May 9-11. For more details call: 44 171 7134133

Thursday May 9: Sylva Fischerová - Czech Republic, Andrzej Sosnowski - Poland, Evelyn Schlager - Austria, Nuno Júdice - Portugal

Friday May 10: Paul Durcan - Ireland, John F. Deane - Ireland, James Kelman - Scotland, R.S. Thomas - Wales

Saturday May 11: Ewald Murrer - Czech Republic, Jim Barnes - USA, Abdulrah al-Udhari - Yemen, Natan Zach - Israel

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Sketch

Major in the dock for blame-rigging



Simon Hoggart

WITH a chutzpah Dame Shirley Porter herself might envy, the Government blamed the Westminster vote-rigging scandal on the Labour Party. "Disgraceful", "improper" and "unlawful" are a few of the words used by the district auditor to describe the behaviour of Westminster councillors. Others are "squalid", "evasive" and "false". It may be the greatest municipal scandal in British history. But under present political practice, the bigger the scandal, the more likely it is to be the Opposition's fault. Look at the shameful way Labour brought about the arms-for-Iraq imbroglio. Or their disgraceful decision to get British bases brutally throughout the world. It's no wonder that for the Government, Labour's appalling behaviour at Westminster was the final straw. Mr Major was scarcely capable of containing his rage. Tony Blair reminded him that he had said, two years ago, that if the original allegations of vote-rigging and gerrymandering were confirmed, he would condemn it "absolutely and unreservedly". Would he now do so? Apparently not. "I am surprised to have to say this to a distinguished lawyer. I believe in justice," he said, setting himself apart from the lynch mob opposites who wanted to condemn Dame Shirley on evidence so flimsy it had taken a mere eight years and 14,000 pages of evidence to cobble together. "Individuals have the right to appeal the auditor's decision. I understand that they vehemently contest his report... with the trail of waste, inefficiency and corruption in Labour councils up and down the country, you are in no position to lecture anyone!"

Political instability is the only certainty from the general election, with the Congress party set for third place and the Hindu BJP unable to govern alone



The Bharatiya Janata Party candidate for premier, A. B. Vajpayee, salutes his party's success

India faces poll turmoil

Suzanna Goldberg in New Delhi. INDIA'S ruling Congress party faced a rout in first results from general elections yesterday, amid signs it could be relegated to a humiliating third place, after once governing the country as a virtual right. The prime minister, P. V. Narasimha Rao, announced that he would submit his resignation to India's president after a cabinet meeting today. But while the Congress has disintegrated as a national force, no party is able to take its place. The country faces political instability under a coalition government whose parameters have yet to take shape. With just over one-third of seats declared on the second day of counting, there were few evident signs of alarm. However, results that point to an India that has never been so divided.

BJP. However, projections on the state-controlled Doordarshan network said the Congress could come a close third behind the NDFP with 130-140 seats. The projections gave the BJP 175-185 seats. Unfilled parties, who will be treated with unaccustomed regard as the kingmakers of Indian politics scuffle for coalition partners, were projected to win 70-80 seats. While spokesmen at the white colonial bungalow in New Delhi that is the Congress party's central office tried to put on a brave face, they said the Congress would not even try to form a government. "The party will have to do some introspection and find out what it did wrong and find ways of revitalising the party," a spokesman, V. N. Gadgil, admitted. The foreign minister, Pranab Mukherjee, said the party had been too modest about its achievements, especially the economic reforms embraced in 1991, which have the broad support of middle-class city dwellers. "I think we have not been able to communicate the message of the liberalisation of the economy," he said.



Victorious BJP candidate Vijay Goel, centre, celebrates with the party's chief minister of New Delhi, Sahib Singh Verma, left, and supporters yesterday

Wit and wiles of mice and men

Cannes 96

Jonathan Romney

HERE we are at the start of another Cannes, and familiar shimmering chords quicken the pulse. Whoever chose the music for the competition trailer—Saint-Saëns' 'Carnival of the Animals'—is my idea of a cruel wit. The proceedings opened with a pithy piece about split personality and the travails of identity: Mickey Perd La Tête—Runaway Brain—is the first Mickey Mouse short in 42 years. As an attempt to bring the cloying li'l fella into the Nineties, it's a sharp little effort, although not quite in the manic league of the Spielberg-produced Roger Rabbit shorts. Here, Mickey is a slobbish computer game aficionado who gets his brain implanted into a monster and becomes a slavering ghoulish less than honourable intentions towards ever-cry Mimmie. The Nineties irony is cranked up at the expense of Mickey's goody-goody image—on his wall is a cheese poster with the slogan Just Say No—but it's not too snugly self-conscious to alienate the new generation of mouse lovers that Disney is probably hoping for. In more elevated mode, the opening film, Patrice Leconte's Ridicule, was the costume drama that has become regulation festival fare. Beautifully scripted by René Waterhouse, it's set in the time of Louis XVI, when reputations were made and wrecked by a bon mot. Charles Berling plays a provincial aristocrat who comes to Versailles hoping to save the beleaguered people of his marshland estate. He's befriended by an amiable Marquis (Jean Rochefort), who teaches him that wit rather than wisdom will get him on at court. Humiliation is not the worst peril that lies ahead—there are also the intrigues of predatory court favourite Fanny Ardant and a corrupt Abbé, played with viperish charm by Bernard Giraudeau. The setting may suggest Les Liaisons Dangereuses with one-liners, but Ridicule is an original piece with its own uncomfortable vision of the world. The court, a labyrinth of ante-chambers littered with petitions and ruined lives, is a place that thrives on polished emptiness, where seriousness is banned and survival as an ace wit is possible only by ruthless humiliation of others. Without labouring the point, Waterhouse and Leconte make it plain that they're talking as much about the present as the past. Beautifully, but not over-acquisitely photographed by Thierry Arbogast, the film has one drawback—the onerous conventions of sumptuous costume mean that the visuals are always one step behind the script. But overall, it's a beautiful balance between production elegance and verbal flair. The long debate about the mysteries of English humour certainly went down a treat with the international audience. Out small hours, G2 page 5

'Farm-belt Führer' goes on trial

US Nazi is charged with pouring racist propaganda into Germany

A LEADING American neo-Nazi went on trial in Hamburg yesterday, charged with inciting hatred by exploiting freedom of speech laws in his homeland to pour fascist propaganda into Germany for almost a quarter of a century. Gary Lauck, aged 42, of Lincoln, Nebraska, and dubbed the "Farm-belt Führer" in the United States, faces up to five years in jail if found guilty on 38 counts of stirring up racial hatred and disseminating Nazi symbols and literature, which are illegal in Germany. Mr Lauck became a Hitler obsessive after reading the Nazi leader's Mein Kampf at the age of 13. He sports a similar toothbrush moustache, affects a Hitler hairstyle, adopts a German accent in speaking English, and prefers to be addressed not as Gary, but as Germanised Gerhard. "All of which makes him sound more like Charlie Chaplin than Adolf Hitler,"



Gary Lauck: Became a Hitler obsessive at the age of 13

Lauck for the past 15 years, he has been the key purveyor of white supremacist and neo-Nazi propaganda and Swastika stickers to the German neo-Nazi movement. The Nebraska-based operation has been churning out videos, pamphlets, and stickers by the thousand for years, including the Nazi anti-semitic film The Eternal Jew. His party paper, Nazi Battle Cry, responded to his extradition to Germany last year by calling for the assassination of Germany's federal prosecutor-general, Kay Nehm. Mr Lauck is believed to have become involved with the neo-Nazi movement in the US in his teens. During the 1970s and 1980s, he was a regular visitor to Germany, where he was occasionally detained and deported. But the surge in neo-Nazi activism and anti-foreigner violence that followed unification in 1990 triggered a harder approach from the German authorities. Their determination to muzzle the Lauck operation strengthened in 1992 when Nazi Battle Cry called for the establishment of "an armed movement" and published a bomb-maker's manual.

Youth justice workers aim at tougher penalties for crime

Alan Travis. NATIONAL "protocol" agreed by social services and probation officers to ensure that sentences given to teenage offenders are tough was launched yesterday. The protocol's aim is to "bury the notion once and for all that community alternatives to custody are a soft option". It was prompted by cases such as a boy sent on safari while in local authority secure accommodation. The protocol says variation in the way young offenders are dealt with across the country amounts to "justice by geography". Every area should provide measures which can be readily understood by the public, magistrates and offenders.

De Klerk's party abandons Mandela 'unity' government

continued from page 1 holding statement saying: "The IFP reserves its position over its membership of the government." Reaction from other parties was largely derisive. The Freedom Front, representing conservative Afrikaners, described the National Party as "rats" abandoning ship. The Pan-Africanist Congress called on the ANC to "rule and legislate in the interests of the dispossessed majority."

unencumbered by the kind of compromises it had to make in the past". The liberal Democratic Party said the National Party would be as irrelevant in opposition as it had been in government. The decision to move into formal opposition followed unsuccessful attempts by Mr De Klerk to use the threat of withdrawal to pressure the African National Congress into conceding a power-sharing system of government beyond the turn of the century.

"Since the new constitution does not provide for the continuation of any form of joint decision-making in the executive branch of government, we have decided that the time has come for us to play our full role as the main opposition party," Mr De Klerk said. "The National Party has felt for some time now that our influence within the government of national unity has been declining. The ANC is

acting more and more as if they no longer need multi-party government." Mr De Klerk said he had informed Mr Mandela by telephone of the party's decision. The president had been "cool" and "his usual friendly self" and "did not try to discuss the merits with me". Mr De Klerk denied that he intended to quit politics. His withdrawal from government will leave Thabo Mbeki as Mr Mandela's sole deputy.

Trader in rare species jailed

Paul Brown Environment Correspondent

A TAXIDERMIST who encouraged people to kill some of the world's rarest creatures was jailed for two years yesterday after pleading guilty to six specialist charges of illegal trafficking in wildlife. Nicolaas Peters was found to have freezers, an attic and two barns stuffed with more than 500 animals and birds from all over the world when his home was raided. The sentence, which included an order to pay \$5,500 towards the prosecution costs, was the heaviest penalty ever imposed for wildlife offences. Peters, a Dutchman, aged 41, traded under the name Identity Products in taxidermy supplies and dead wildlife specimens from his 217,000 home at Wood View in the village of Acherbatesp, near Newtown, mid-Wales. He had pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing to six counts of fraudulently exporting and two of fraudulently importing specimens of creatures protected under the CITES international convention on endangered species. Peters was told his sentence was to reflect the fact he persistently flouted the law and knowingly encouraged people to kill endangered species. Among the specimens in his possession were a Siberian tiger, a ring-tailed lemur and a Philippine eagle, one of the most endangered species in the world with only 50 pairs surviving. Some of the specimens were pickled and some frozen ready for preparation for sale to black market collectors. Mr Peters had already been prosecuted in France and Germany and was raided by Customs in August last year after being tracked to his Welsh home. Traffic, a World Wide Fund for Nature campaign aimed at stopping the illegal trade in wild animals, and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds were involved in a joint operation. Officials were shocked at the numbers and range of animals Mr Peters had accumulated. Charges related to monkeys, macaques, a bushbaby, a lemur, and a number of birds including a Humboldt penguin, lesser flamingo and 15 species of Philippine birds. Graham Wynne, conservation director for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, said: "The Philippine eagle is perched on the very brink of extinction. The loss of just one bird is a tragedy, not just for the Philippines, where it is the national bird, but for the whole world." David Whittaker, defending, said Peters was now regarded as a pariah in his business. "Zoos, fellow collectors and taxidermists have all effectively washed their hands of him. His business will suffer irreparable damage long after today's outcome."

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Trader in rare species jailed

Paul Brown
Environment Correspondent



Roseanne Barr: project dropped

Darling, we've been binned by the Yanks

Ian Katz in New York and Barbie Dutter

A YEAR ago Absolutely Fabulous was the toast of American television. The relentlessly de-bauched BBC sitcom was a critics' favourite, Roseanne Barr was hard at work on her own version of the show, and a Hollywood studio was bent on bringing Patsy and Edina to the big screen.

But yesterday, as it emerged that plans for a film version have been scrapped, it appeared that the AbFab express has run into the buffers of American political correctness.

Roseanne's version of the sitcom has already reportedly been placed on ice because of network executives' nervousness over Patsy and Edina's prodigious appetites for drugs, booze and men.

A heavily toned down American-made AbFab clone has meanwhile bombed, and Comedy Central, the cable channel which still airs the BBC original, starting Jennifer Saunders and Joanna Lumley, three times a week, reports that ratings are way down from its peak last year.

"We're on the back end of it now," said Comedy Central spokesman Joe Lyons. The channel has already broadcast the 24 episodes of the sitcom several times.

Polygram Film Entertainment last year signed a deal with Ms Saunders, who conceived and wrote the series about a boozey middle-aged fashion publi-



Jennifer Saunders and Joanna Lumley as Patsy and Edina in Absolutely Fabulous. The toned down US version has bombed

city, her prissy teenage daughter, played by Julia Sawalha, and her fast-living, promiscuous friend played by Ms Lumley.

But in Cannes this week, Ms Saunders' agent, Maureen Vincent, said the comedian and writer had "come to the conclusion, after a long period of thinking, that she didn't want to expose her idea on the big screen."

Polygram sources told Daily Variety that they had accepted a script treatment prepared by Ms Saunders, but she had later decided

not to go ahead with the film version.

Last year, the series was deemed too crude for prime time viewing by executives at the US television network ABC.

The show was axed before it went on air following rows over the raunchy scripts.

Ms Saunders' scripts were rewarded with Bafta and Emmy awards, as was Ms Lumley's larger-than-life portrayal of Patsy, the drunken, nymphomaniacal best friend of Saunders' Edina. The producer, Jon Plowman, also received a Bafta award in the show's first year.

The first series is currently being repeated by the BBC, following a decision by Ms Saunders to pull the plug on the show, which earned her an estimated \$600,000 from her deal with the BBC and as-

sorted spin-offs. She has, however, written a special, hour-long farewell episode, centred on Edina and Patsy's adventures on the ski slopes, which will be screened as a one-off in the autumn to spearhead a \$21 million BBC comedy package.

Most will outgrow symptoms, study suggests Nearly 50pc suffer 'asthma' attacks

Chris Millill
Medical Correspondent

NEARLY half the population are likely to develop wheezing illnesses such as asthma by their early 30s, researchers say today in one of the biggest ever studies carried out into incidence of the condition.

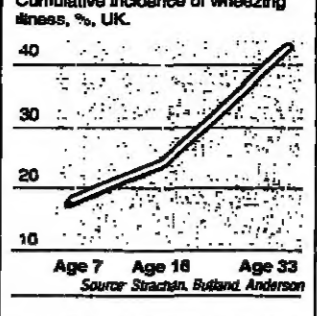
They warn that although the majority of children with asthma will outgrow the symptoms, a quarter will continue with problems throughout their adult life.

The researchers say that by the age of seven, 18 per cent of people have suffered from wheezing illness. This rises to 24 per cent at age 16, and 43 per cent at 33.

David Strachan and colleagues, from the department of public health sciences at St George's Hospital, London, say that a history of hay fever and smoking are the main risk factors for adult asthma. One of the clearest risk factors for children developing asthma is if their mothers have smoked during pregnancy.

The doctors have used data from 15,539 people, who comprise what is known as the 1958 British national child development study.

Out of breath
Cumulative incidence of wheezing illness, % UK



This is following the lives of all people born in England, Scotland and Wales in the week starting March 3, 1958, monitoring their health at certain points.

The members of the group have been examined at the ages of 7, 11, 16, 24 and 33.

Dr Strachan and his colleagues, reporting their findings in the British Medical Journal, say that previous attempts to assess the incidence of wheezing illness may have underestimated it by as much as a third.

"At least two-thirds of children who develop wheezing by the age of 16 do so before they are five years old, and many experience their first attack in infancy," they continue. "Abnormal-

ities in lung function are detectable before the onset of asthmatic symptoms. Some causal agent must therefore act very early in life, possibly before birth."

The researchers looked at a number of factors to see if these influenced risk of the illness, including maternal age, the number of other children, birth weight, premature delivery and breast feeding, but found that there was no connection.

Mothers suffering a haemorrhage during pregnancy, which can be caused by smoking, represented a risk, as did an abnormality of a protein called albumin. Smoking during pregnancy also constituted a risk factor.

The doctors point out that asthma symptoms tend to die down in late teenage years. But in their study they found these problems could reappear later, with one quarter wheezing at the age of 33, although the majority of these had been free of attacks after the age of 16.

"We believe that our study is unique in showing that, even after a disease-free interval of seven years, subjects with a history of wheezing illness in childhood retained a risk of later wheezing above that of their healthy peers," say the doctors.

Scots keep flag flying

Forsyth hoist by his own protest as office is draped in EU colours

Wheok Chaudhary

IF Michael Forsyth had had his way, few in Scotland would have noticed that yesterday was Europe Day.

That was until two supporters of the Scottish National Party decided to drape a European Union flag above the Scottish Secretary's constituency office in Stirling.

The stunt was pulled by Charles Gormley, who lives above the office, and Dr Robert McIntyre, an elder statesman of the Scottish National Party, after Mr Forsyth banned the EU flag from being hoisted above government buildings in Scotland in protest at the European ban on British beef.

Mr Gormley's wife, Jeanette, said her husband had come up with the idea during a conversation with Dr McIntyre, who lives next door to the Stirling Conservative office.

She added: "I'm not that keen on Europe myself. It's really just to upset Michael Forsyth. We've been trying to get up his nose for years but we don't usually seem to get very far."

Dr McIntyre, now retired from public life, was the last Provost of the old Royal Burgh of Stirling before its abolition in 1975. He was also the first SNP member to be elected a Member of Parliament.

He said: "It's not my flag and it's not my flat. Charles Gormley hung it out and Charles is a very nice neighbour."

The Tories are not nice neighbours, although they've been more polite recently since they started to do so badly in the opinion polls."

Mr Forsyth, who is attending the Scottish Conservative conference, was not there to see the blue European flag supersede the Union Flag which usually flies above his constituency office.

His agent Simon Turner, however, failed to see the funny side of a valiant attempt to forge a bit of European unity.

He said: "People above the office are supporters of the SNP and would surrender our sovereignty to Brussels."

"This is an insult to all farmers who are suffering from the unjustified ban on beef which has been imposed by Brussels."

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Groundsman caught off guard

Wheok Chaudhary

HE LAMENTED a bygone era where cricketers arrived in suits, called the groundsman sir, and respected him "because he knew his ground."

Women, Tony Pocock once said during his reign as head groundsman at Fenner's, Cambridge University's home ground, posed the biggest threat to the institution's cricketing pedigree.

The arrival of more women meant fewer men, which meant fewer gentlemen, and consequently the collapse of cricketing standards.

Nothing, however, had prepared Mr Pocock for the arrival of the consultants.

Yesterday, cries of "Howzat!" gave way to claims of unfair dismissal as an industrial tribunal heard Mr Pocock allege that he was constructively dismissed from his job two years ago by Cambridge University.

His professional capability, he said, had been "irreparably damaged" after outside consultants were brought in to do work for which Mr Pocock believed he should have solely been responsible.

The row surrounding one of Britain's most venerable cricket grounds, which has played host to some of the sport's greatest stars, began in 1994 when the university decided to lay a new square under the supervision of the Test and County Cricket Board (TCB).



Tony Pocock... 'Professional standing was eroded'

Mr Pocock, aged 48, who joined the ground staff at Fenner's at the age of 15, told the tribunal: "I was head groundsman at Fenner's. I should have overseen the work. My professional capability was eroded and irreparably damaged."

The tribunal heard that Andy Cosh, the cricket club representative at Cambridge University, only spoke to Mike Cawley and Harry Erind, the two TCB consultants who were overseeing the work.

Mr Pocock said: "Dr Cosh did not want to know my opinion.

The TCB specifications, she claimed, involved digging 12 inches of soil, relaying eight inches of base material followed by four inches of top dressing.

Mr Pocock replied: "I laid pitches to the best ability as head groundsman."

The hearing continues.

An Aga saga, however, it is not, and in case you are still in any doubt, by page 83 Trollope takes a swipe at the genre. Lyndsay is reading a novel about country life but "it was a wish-think world of bird-song and caricature villagers..."

Laura Tennant. Review page 7

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4 BRITAIN

Goya goes on sale as BR shunts its art to the market

Dan Glaister reports on the offloading of a pension fund's amassed treasures

A BRITISH Rail sell-off with a difference was announced yesterday with the news that its pension fund is to auction a work by the Spanish painter Francisco de Goya. The painting, *Death Of A Picador*, will have an estimated price of £1.5 million when it goes for auction at Sotheby's in London.

The painting is one of a series of six bullfighting scenes painted in 1793, when Goya was recovering from a severe illness, probably thuitus. It marks a transitional period in Goya's career, as he moved from the court painting he had carried out before his illness to the more fantastic and grotesque works for which he is chiefly known today.

It is also seen as one of the first times an artist was painting for his own pleasure, rather than to please a patron.

As so many of Goya's small works have been sold abroad, Sotheby's expects Spanish collectors to make a strong bid to bring back the painting to Spain.

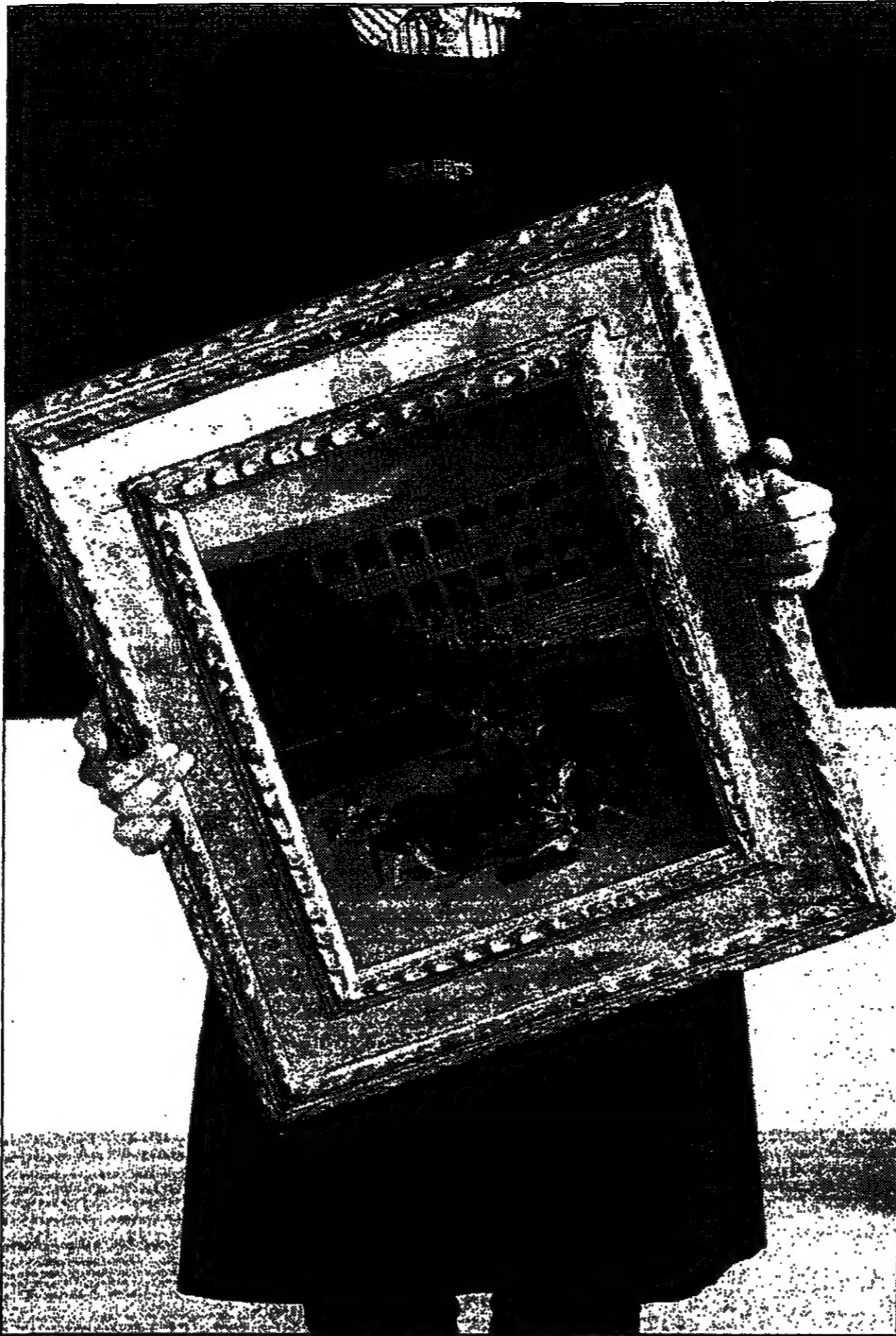
BR's pension fund invested £40 million of its reserves, 2.9 per cent of its assets, in fine art in the 1970s. The 2,400 works accumulated over seven years have been sold off since the late 1980s. Another Goya from the same series, *Sorting The Bulls*, sold last year for £1.8 million, double its reserve price.

This latest sale means more than three-quarters of the holding will have been sold. Other works due to go on sale in three auctions in July include 23 Old Master paintings, mainly by 17th century Dutch and Flemish landscape painters, Greek, Roman and Egyptian antiquities, and a

12th century Limoges enamel casket. The three sales are expected to raise £10 million. Sotheby's, which advised the pension fund on the original acquisitions and has handled the subsequent sales, hopes *Death Of A Picador* will do as well as last year's Goya. "I hope the estimate is cautious," said Alexander Bell, Sotheby's head of Old Master paintings. "It's always difficult to know at this level. I hope that it does as well as the last one, which is not so obviously a Spanish painting. This is quintessential Goya because it is a bullfighting scene, that most dramatic moment when a picador is gored by a bull."

After some heady successes with its sales of Impressionists in the late 1980s, when a Renoir bought for £580,000 in 1976 was sold for £3.4 million in 1993, the fund's recent sales of Old Masters have shown what a precarious business investing in art can be. The last sale, in July 1995, proved a disappointment. It brought in £5.2 million, producing the equivalent of an annual rate of return of 0.73 per cent on the original investment. However, the previous sale, in December 1994, brought in £8.3 million from an investment of £620,000, an annual return of 5.02 per cent.

The worst area for the pension fund has been its sales of books and manuscripts. Old Masters, though, are good business at the moment. "We've found that the Old Masters market has strengthened in the last 18 months," said Mr Bell. With this year marking the 250th anniversary of Goya's birth, and a huge Goya retrospective at the Prado museum, Madrid, the market for his work is probably at a peak.



Goya's *Death Of A Picador* which will be auctioned in London at Sotheby's

PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILLITOE

Carey attacks 'prison works' policies

Archbishop issues blunt jails warning to Home Secretary

Alan Travis Home Affairs Editor

THE Archbishop of Canterbury last night launched a devastating critique of the principles behind Michael Howard's "prison works" policy — and bluntly warned the Home Secretary: "If you treat people like animals, they will respond like animals."

Although George Carey, a former prison chaplain, made

a similar speech a year ago the language and tone of last night's sharp attack on Mr Howard's policy was far more direct and urgent.

In the Prison Reform Trust annual lecture last night, Dr Carey followed the convention of not naming the Home Secretary, but placed Mr Howard squarely in his sights when he warned that "present penal policy" was "weighted too heavily in favour of imprisonment to the detriment of those forms of

correction which, I firmly believe, offer more hope in the long term."

He praised recent striking improvements, including a marked reduction in smelly, insanitary and overcrowded conditions, but warned that what had been gained in the past two years was endangered by current penal policy.

He even went on to attack the language used by Home Office ministers in talking about crime: "The climate should be one where we love the sinner while hating and rejecting the sin. The climate should be one where we rise above the attitudes and vocabulary of revenge, war or

punishment for its own sake, and speak instead the language of justice dominated by the aim of restoring broken relationships."

The archbishop said the Prison Service faced a formidable triple challenge of a sharply rising prison population, a 13 per cent cut in costs over the next three years; and a new, intensified focus on security. "Any one of these challenges might be easier to absorb without the other two. The combination of all three is causing widespread apprehension."

It was outrageous that dangerous prisoners escaped from custody and people com-

mitted new offences while on temporary release, "but it does not follow that these concerns should dominate the overall climate in which the criminal justice system is working," he said.

He said the financial cuts, rising numbers and new security regimes tended to focus attention on the "impersonal fundamentals of the prison regime rather than the restoration of relationships which is the long-term purpose of the criminal justice system."

Dr Carey went on to make detailed criticisms of changes in the prison system, including "tragic and bad" cuts to the education budget; the

"widespread injustice" of the numbers held on remand; the "appalling burden on families" of most young offenders being held 100 miles from home; and damage to family relationships from the "considerable curtailment of home leave and temporary release".

Protecting the public from violent prisoners, satisfying the demands of deterrence and the repudiation of crime were all valid purposes of imprisonment, he said, but "one wonders how the protection of the public for the duration of a person's sentence can justify the huge numbers who shuffle in and out of the prison system today".

Virtual pets live virtual lives to the full

Jack Schofield on life on the Internet

ARTIFICIAL life will reach new heights in September when computer owners will not only be able to play with "virtual pets", they will be able to "breed" them as well.

Since "breeding" works as in real life, only with digital DNA, no one knows what might ultimately result. Stephen Grand, senior programmer on the project, admits: "We've no idea what we've started."

The "pets", furry, cartoon-like "virtual creatures" called *Norns*, are said to be no harder to care for than hamsters, but cost nothing to feed and don't make messes.

They will be distributed on floppy disk as "virtual eggs" for users to hatch and feed.



Norn, the 'virtual pet', which its creators claim is capable of 'breeding'

and can even learn simple words. After six to 10 hours of computer time they reach adolescence and become interested in the opposite sex — which should result in the female producing an egg. But there's nothing salacious about their breeding. "They just kiss for a bit longer," says Mr Grand. "We have the Americans to consider."

The *Norns* can also get drunk, or sick. They exhibit a range of groans and cries, shake or sneeze, and perhaps die. Toby Simpson — one of Mr Grand's colleagues at Millennium, the British firm developing the program — says: "If they're really ill, there's no reason why you shouldn't send them to us to look at, perhaps for a small fee."

Mr Simpson says people who use the program will

be able to exchange eggs or send creatures to one another over the Internet. "If you are going away you'll be able to send them on holiday," he says. The drawback is that other people "invariably teach them to swear."

Although "virtual pets" have a long history — *Mindscape's Dogz* is just the latest in a series that goes back through *Activision's Little Computer People* to abstract things called "cellular automata" — Millennium's creatures are far more complex than anything attempted before. They have a complete but simplified biochemistry, and you can even examine their brains to see neural patterns developing. This is of great interest to computer scientists trying to develop thinking machines.

Cyber-Fido: the benefits

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- No chewed slippers
- No bones under the bed

Abductor sorry for boy's death

Duncan Campbell Crime Correspondent

THE man accused of murdering nine-year-old Daniel Handley told the boy he was "sorry" as he helped to strangle him, a court heard yesterday. Jurors were shown a video of the man describing how he and a friend had abducted, sexually abused, killed and buried the boy.

Video recordings of Brett Tyler, aged 30, being interviewed by police in the Philippines and in England last year were shown at his trial at the Old Bailey. Tyler is pleading not guilty to murder. After Tyler had described on the video what had been done to the boy, some jury members became distressed and the court was adjourned briefly.

In the first recording, Tyler told two detectives how he and his friend, Timothy Morris, aged 33, took the boy from a street in Beckton, east London, after they had been driving around looking for boys, as they regularly did.

He said usually the hunt came to nothing. On this occasion, they had followed Daniel and pulled him into their car.

He said they took Daniel to a minicab office in south London and told him what they were going to do. Tyler said he had filmed Morris bugging the boy and then bugged him himself.

After the assaults, Daniel asked if he could get dressed and go home. He was taken to the car and the three of them drove towards Bristol.

Tyler explained in the video Daniel had fallen asleep in the car. Near Bristol they turned into a side road. "Tim said 'You know we have to do this' and I said 'Yes'," said Tyler. "I got into the back with Daniel. He woke up slightly and just asked if we were home yet. I said 'Not yet'." Morris had tied a rope round Daniel's neck with the knot at the throat, he said, and then told Tyler to pull one end of it.

"I said I couldn't. He said 'I'd got to, so I started pulling it. I kept telling him I was sorry until he was dead.'"

They drove to a golf course where they buried Daniel, returning later to make the hole deeper.

Both men fled to the Philippines but, after a week, he said he could not stand to be near Morris who had then left.

He had been told by telephone that Morris had been arrested in England and had tried to kill himself by taking largactyl. He had also slashed his wrists and his elbow and tried to hang himself, he said during his recorded interviews.

Tyler later retracted his confession and denied murder but is pleading guilty to buggery and false imprisonment. Morris has admitted murdering Daniel on October 2, 1994, buggery and false imprisonment.

The trial continues.

5 DAYS TO GO

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bullet surgery for girl in doubt

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Bullet surgery for girl in doubt

Chris Millill
Medical Correspondent

AN AFRICAN girl aged five, who was flown to Britain yesterday for an operation to remove a bullet lodged in her brain, will have to wait until at least the middle of next week to learn whether the procedure is feasible, doctors said.

Tenneh Cole, an orphan from Sierra Leone, was hit by a rifle bullet 16 months ago in fighting near her home. The bullet is trapped behind her right eye. She is thought to be almost totally deaf and has lost much of her sight.

She was brought to this country by the charity Hope and Homes for Children, set up by former colonial Mark Cook, who heard about her plight.

Doctors at the Norfolk and Norwich hospital offered to remove the bullet free of charge, if it could be done.

However, tests and scans to assess Tenneh's general health and the exact position of the bullet will not be carried out until the weekend.

Richard Beach, director of paediatric care at the hospital, said she would be assessed by an eye consultant, an ear, nose and throat consultant, a facial specialist and a neurologist.

"On Friday and over the weekend we will do detailed scans, and then probably in the middle of next week hold a meeting of the key specialists to decide what to do," Dr Beach said.

"We will have to strike a balance between leaving the bullet there, and trying to assess how much trouble it will cause if we do that, as against the risk of removing it, when everything has healed over the past 16 months."

"It could be that we would make things worse rather than better by attempting to remove it."

Facial surgeon Geoffrey Cheney said it was unusual but by no means uncommon for people to live normally with pieces of debris lodged in their heads.

"It was a problem many soldiers had faced, he said, but often people lived quite normal lives without ever having the debris removed."

Doctors in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, who examined Tenneh said she would die if the bullet was not removed.



Tenneh Cole with Caroline and Mark Cook, founders of Hope and Homes for Children, at Heathrow PHOTOGRAPH: TIM OCKENDES

Voters blame ministers for beef crisis

Tory supporters a minority in directing anger at Europe

Martin Kettle

MORE than a month after the start of the beef crisis, the Government has failed to persuade the voters — as distinct from its own backbenchers — that the principal blame lies with the Europeans. Instead, a Guardian/ICM poll today finds that three out of five voters blame either the farmers or the Government for the continuing beef problem.

The poll, taken last weekend, showed most people laid the blame for the crisis at the Government's feet. Asked who was most to blame, 45 per cent said the Government, with only 18 per cent nominating the Europeans. Seventeen per cent blamed the farmers for the crisis, while one in five voters did not know who to blame.

Conservative voters followed the Government in concentrating their wrath on Europe, with 35 per cent blaming the European Union, 23 per cent the farmers and 20 per cent their own Government.

But the poll as a whole showed that the Government

was in serious danger of talking only to its own supporters about the beef crisis. Tory voters were out of step with all other age, gender, class, regional and political support groups in the poll, all of whom put most of the blame on the Government.

Voters aged between 25 and 34, many of them presumably parents of small children, were especially critical of the Government: only 14 per cent blamed Europe, with 51 per cent pointing the finger at the Government.

The poll was not unmitigated bad news for the Government. The good news for them was that only a fifth of the population thought it had not responded decisively enough to the crisis. The measures it had taken to deal with the slump in confidence were either endorsed or regarded as excessive by a large majority of the electorate. Asked for their views of the government package, only 19 per cent said the measures did not go far enough. The rest were evenly divided between the 37 per cent who thought they were about right and the 34 per cent who thought they went too far.

The beef crisis

Who's to blame?

Who do you blame most for the beef crisis? (%)

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Farmers | 17 |
| Government | 45 |
| European Union | 18 |
| Don't know | 20 |

Are we doing enough?

The government has banned certain parts of cattle from human consumption and is about to start culling cattle over 30 months old. To restore public confidence in beef products do you think these proposals go too far, not far enough or are they about right? (%)

| | |
|----------------|----|
| Go too far | 34 |
| About right | 37 |
| Not far enough | 19 |
| Don't know | 10 |

Ten per cent were don't know. Nearly twice as many Labour as Conservative voters — 24 per cent as against 13 per cent — believed that the package of measures did not go far enough. But even among Labour voters the most popular response was that the measures were about right. Such is the unpopularity of the Government, people seem disposed to blame it for

PM undermines Forsyth appeal to 'sacred duty'

Tory confusion on Scots home rule

Erinrod Clouston

THE Conservatives yesterday renewed their insistence that Labour should hold a referendum on Scottish devolution, while their own plans for an Edinburgh parliament were swathed in confusion.

On the opening day of the Tories' Scottish conference in Aberdeen, Scottish Secretary Michael Forsyth told representatives they had a "sacred duty" to save Scotland from Labour's plans for a tax-raising legislature.

His appeal was part of an emotional attempt to reinforce the Caledonian credentials of the northern wing of the party, which opponents deride as an appendage to its English operation.

Citing high Tories Sir Walter Scott, novelist John Buchan and the 17th century Marquis of Montrose, he said "no one in this hall needs lessons in Scottish patriotism from parties which have just arrived on the scene".

The demand that Labour put its devolution plans before the Scottish electorate came during an attack on proposals which, Mr Forsyth said, would "destroy the United Kingdom and threaten Scotland's vital services".

Appearing under the slogan Fighting For Scotland, he



Michael Forsyth... said plans would 'destroy the UK'

said: "Why are they so afraid to put it to a referendum?" His comments echoed a similar demand from Sir Michael Hirst, chairman of a Scottish party which lags well behind Labour and Scottish Nationalists in the polls.

However, their protests were overshadowed by an apparent attempt by the Prime Minister to water down Mr Forsyth's warning last week that a parliament, once in place, could not be disestablished. "You can't make an omelette and then unscramble the eggs," he said.

Mr Major, due to appear in

Aberdeen tomorrow, refused to be as categorical in a radio interview yesterday, saying only: "Parliament will have to decide whether it will undo it". He was cautiously backed by Sir Michael, who told a press conference that there would always be opposition to the principle of "driving a wedge into the United Kingdom".

The Conservatives' complaint reflects a growing sentiment north of the border, shared by at least two Labour MPs, that it would be unsafe to read the result of a general election as an endorsement for major constitutional upheaval.

An ICM poll in yesterday's Scotsman newspaper showed that 68 per cent of Scots, and a majority of every party's supporters, favour a referendum. This conjures up the nightmare of a second referendum, of a re-run of the 1979 ballot which saw a narrow "yes" majority defeated because of the pre-condition that 40 per cent of the electorate should support home rule.

Mindful of this, Labour has ruled out a second referendum on Scottish home rule, but has indicated it will hold them on voting reform, a single European currency and the "silly English assemblies", as Mr Forsyth called them yesterday.

Blair faces PR dilemma

Labour leader seeks to tackle party splits on Welsh devolution

Michael White

TONY Blair will today seek to smooth over deep divisions within the Labour movement in Wales over the shape of the devolution package which would be implemented by a Blair-led government and the controversial role within it of proportional representation.

When Tony Blair addresses his party's annual Welsh conference in Swansea he will praise the devolution document, preparing for a New Wales, which was published this week amid complaints from activists and the Liberal Democrats that all mention of PR had been excluded.

Unlike the debate in Scotland where a cross-party consensus has evolved, the Labour hierarchy in Wales has long been divided over devolution, with a hard core of MPs and activists as fundamentally opposed to it as they were when Neil Kinnock, then a backbencher, led the successful campaign against a Welsh assembly.

Even within the pro-assembly camp there are divisions between those who favour it having full legislative and tax-raising powers — like the planned Scottish assembly — and those against.

But the key question remains PR and the role it would play in reassuring voters in rural Wales that politi-

cal pluralism would be protected from domination by the entrenched city-based Labour machine.

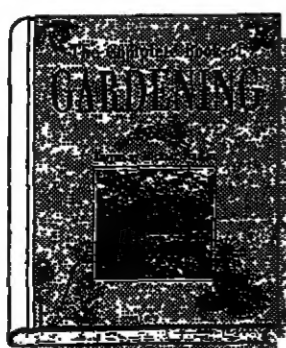
PR has been fiercely resisted by the so-called "Taffia" — to the particular dismay of Liberal Democrats.

Some modernising Labour MPs believe Mr Blair would privately like to see a devolutionary convergence, whereby the Scots drop their tax-raising powers, on which John Major is scoring points, and the Welsh drop their opposition to a form of PR.

Both have been promised legislation in the first year of a Blair government. In practice, if Mr Blair needs Lib Dem votes to carry his bills, he will have to concede PR over the heads of local opposition.

MPs predict that today he will play for time and keep his options open.

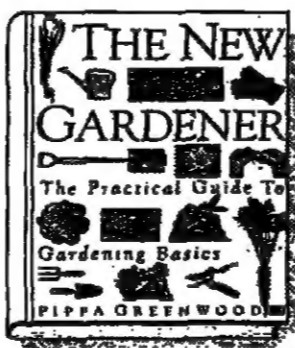
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Yeltsin the winner on Victory Day

The president does his election prospects no harm by playing the father of the nation, writes **David Hearst** in Volgograd

IT WAS a solemn moment. Boris Yeltsin was in the Hall of the Eternal Flame on Victory Day writing a long message to the 34,500 soldiers who fell in 1942 on that spot. A small girl in pigtails was wriggling in the arms of her mother, both pinned into place by the security guards surrounding the president.

Helping hand from Yavlinky

PRESIDENT Boris Yeltsin's hopes of uniting "democratic" forces behind him in Russia's presidential election rose yesterday after Grigory Yavlinsky, a liberal rival, signalled he was ready to compromise. The two men met for two hours on Sunday, and on Wednesday Mr Yavlinsky held out a lifeline for the president, saying he wanted more talks on forming an alliance to fight the Communist Gennady Zyuganov in the June 16 poll.

many mistakes when two years ago he allowed his democratic historians to release the news that the Red Army lost over a million soldiers at the battle of Stalingrad, more than the Germans.

The news had upset veterans in Volgograd, who still call it the hero city of the Soviet Union. Today, perilously close to an election he could still lose, Mr Yeltsin arrived to reclaim this hero city for the young democracy of the Russian state.

Mr Yeltsin was besieged by complaints. The first that anyone could see of him was an advancing large black loudspeaker relaying the disembodied speech of the president.

Just like that. The Tommy Cooper president of the Russian Federation had just spent more than £1.3 million to buy a house with a pool. "You are a doctor," said the familiar voice, "and you get how many roubles? That's little, very little."



Yesterday's hero... Yeltsin hears a second world war veteran reminisce in Volgograd yesterday, the 51st anniversary of victory over Nazi forces

Gene tests stir fears of health insurance bar

Jonathan Freedland in Washington

AMERICANS could lose their jobs, their health care, even the right to have a family — simply because of their genes. A coalition of doctors, lawyers and ordinary citizens is mounting a national campaign against what they claim is the ultimate form of discrimination: gene-ism.

The sound of flapping as Tony is spurned by Julie Andrews

Ian Katz in New York

WHO says melodrama is dead? Certainly not Julie Andrews. The star of *Mary Poppins* and the *Sound of Music* has sent New York's theatrical types into a spin by rejecting a prestigious award nomination because she felt the cast of her Broadway show, *Victor/Victoria*, had been snubbed by the judges.

GIs lose novelty value in Hungary

Nick Thorpe in Tazsar sees the effect of the peace deal in Bosnia

THE women buying summer dresses at a stall in the village of Mernye, near Kaposvar in southern Hungary, do not turn round as four heavy equipment transporters rumble by, loaded with armed infantry vehicles, bound for Bosnia. They are no longer a novelty, just a tolerated fact of life.

Casual jailing of two Zapatistas

Phil Gunson reports on the Mexican crackdown on political dissent and the implications for peace talks

JAVIER Eloorriaga was dressed in shorts and trainers, ready for his afternoon game of football, when the judge's secretary called to see him last week at Cerro Hueco jail in Chiapas.

terrorist conspiracy" by the EZLN. At the time, his interior minister, Esteban Moctesuma, was engaged in exploratory talks with the guerrillas — a process in which Mr Eloorriaga had been acting as messenger between the two sides.

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| India | £7.29 | £12.70 | 43% |
| Canada | £1.65 | £3.80 | 57% |
| Australia | £2.23 | £5.90 | 62% |
| South Africa | £4.70 | £8.20 | 43% |
| Germany/France | £2.11 | £2.96 | 29% |
| Nigeria | £7.05 | £11.05 | 35% |
| Hong Kong | £4.11 | £7.30 | 44% |
| Pakistan | £9.16 | £12.60 | 27% |

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Dear God, if you insist on reincarnation, please promise that I will be Queer ... Yours faithfully, Derek Jarman. Philip Hensher

Review cover story

News in brief

Clinton denies Whitewater claims to jurors TAKING the weight of his office against Whitewater prosecutors' star witness, President Bill Clinton swore in videotaped testimony yesterday that he neither borrowed money from his partners' failing savings and loan company nor asked anyone else to borrow for him.

Blast wounds two Israelis Hizbullah guerrillas set off a roadside bomb near a patrol of pro-Israeli militiamen in south Lebanon yesterday, wounding two of them, pro-Israeli security sources said.

Mayor shot dead Three gunmen, thought to be Muslim guerrillas, burst into a town hall in Algiers and shot dead the district mayor and another city official, the Algerian daily newspaper *Liberte* said.

China executions Nineteen criminals were executed in southern China yesterday, the semi-official China News Service reported. Nearly 2,000 people attended mass rallies in Guangzhou and Panyu to announce the death sentences for crimes ranging from armed robbery to murder.

Donation plan Ownerless assets left in Swiss banks by Holocaust victims will be donated to eastern European Jews if legal heirs cannot be found, Switzerland's most prominent Jewish banker has told a business weekly.

Patients go to t

Chris McGre

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Patient Ugandans go to the polls

Voters pass verdict on 10 years of President Museveni, writes Chris McGreal in Nakaseke

QUEUING patiently, Nakaseke's voters needed only a glance around if they required any reminder of what was at stake. The crumbling ruins of once precious homes were still dotted among reconstructed houses. A mass grave lay nearby. And behind the shuffling line of voters stood the village's administrative offices, its windows shattered from a war which ended a decade ago.

But for most of those voting in Nakaseke yesterday in Uganda's first presidential elections since 1990, the painful reminders of why they were there were carried in their hearts.

"So many terrible things happened but we have come home since [President Yoweri] Museveni took over," said Edward Mwante, who described himself as a peasant. "We've stayed in our villages so peacefully. We are voting carefully so we shall not get any more problems."

President Museveni was seeking election for the first time since he seized power 10 years ago after a bloody civil war put an end to some of the most brutal regimes Africa has seen.

Mr. Museveni's supporters see the election as confirming the legitimacy of a government that has transformed Uganda, bringing it relative peace and prosperity they

Obote, on the heels of Idi Amin, came to an end. Mr Museveni's insurgency was born in the triangle, and its people paid dearly as his successes grew.

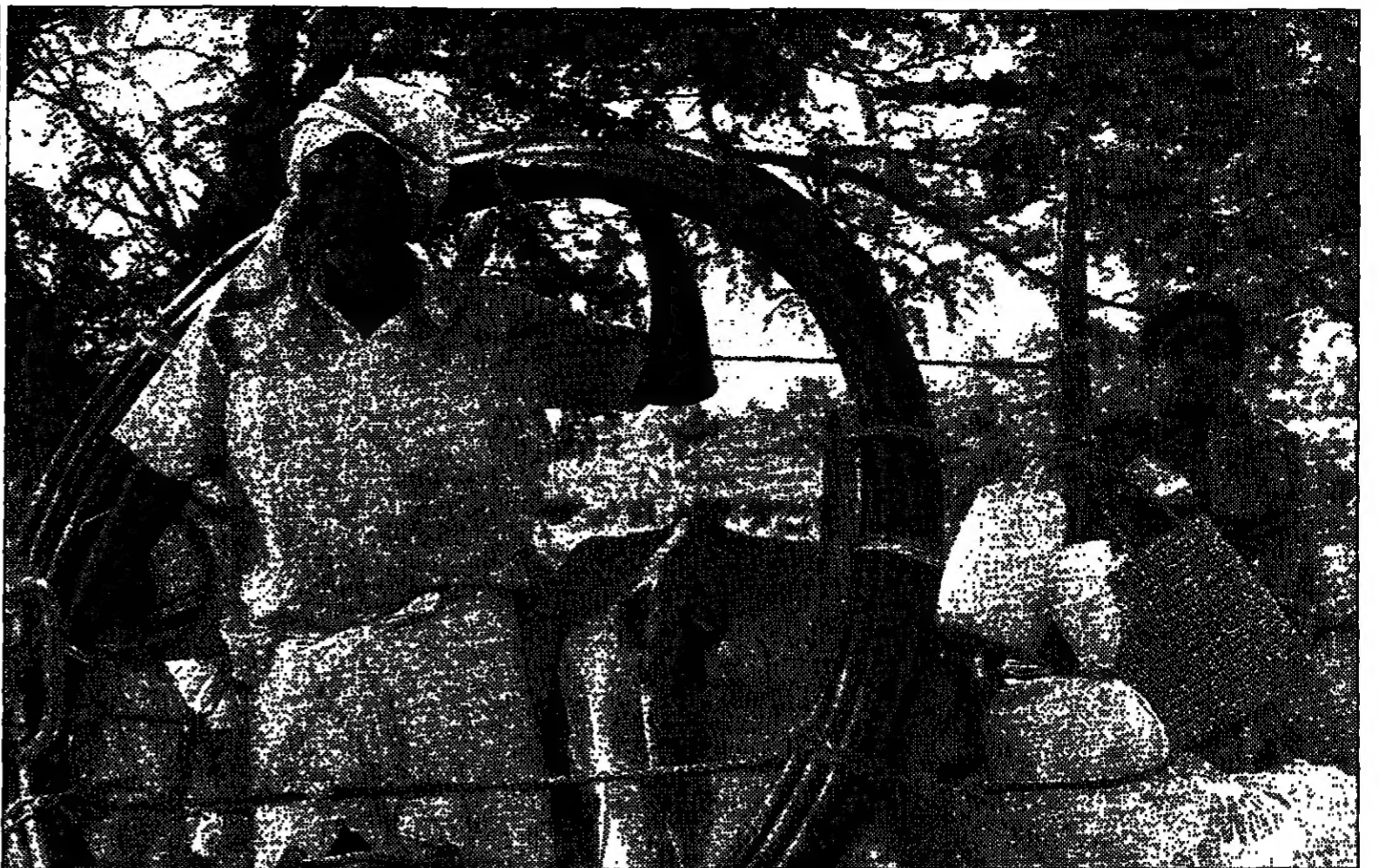
Mr Museveni's victory was a liberation for most, and the relative peace and prosperity he has brought have left people like Charles Ssalongo Lugemusa — a poultry farmer whose family was murdered — wondering why anybody would vote for anyone else. "There were so many who died. It brings tears to my eyes just telling you about it," he said. "When I compare things now, I've been blessed to put up some businesses and so my opinion is that we should continue with Mr Museveni. If we don't vote carefully it could happen again."

Voting carefully is a euphemism among Mr Museveni's supporters for backing his call for no change.

The president's opponents say the elections were less than democratic because party political campaigning was banned. Candidates theoretically ran as individuals.

But Mr Museveni struck a nerve with his warnings that party politics could cost Uganda all it has achieved.

"We have had these parties and they are dangerous," said a teacher, Bamooya Kigidi. "They bring about divisions. You can chat about politics to a member of your family but once you join a party and someone else joins a different party, it means you are enemies. That is the implication. So I think we should keep things as they are. No change is better."



A Tamil couple return to their home in Jaffna, from which they fled during an army offensive against Tamil rebels in December. PHOTOGRAPH DEXTER GRIFFITHS

Eerie calm descends on war-ravaged Jaffna

PEACE has returned to the streets of Jaffna following the carnage of Sri Lanka's civil war, but they look unnaturally quiet for an Asian town.

"Where are all the people?" The government's

chief military spokesman, Brigadier Sarah Munasinghe, laughed. "They're in their homes," he said. "I don't know what you do in your country, but we like to stay indoors during the day."

With the strong sunshine beating down, he might be right. But of the official figure of 250,000 recently returned people — after two successful military offensives — only a few thousand were visible, most of them in a long queue for food. "We've been here nine hours," a Tamil woman said. "We came yesterday too, but they didn't have any rice, only flour and sugar."

A family was travelling along the main road from Jaffna, their bullock cart piled with furniture and suitcases. Why had they come back to what is effectively a military occupation until a civil administration can be put in its place?

"The Tamil Tigers wanted us to go with them, to their jungle bases on the mainland, before the soldiers came. But we couldn't do that. I'm a poor farmer but I've got some land near Jaffna. I don't mind whether I live under army or Tamil Tiger control. I just want to cultivate the land and rebuild our lives."

It seems the urge to return home is stronger than loyalty to either side and the people are more than anything weary of being caught in a tug of war between the government and the Tigers. Those that had come back displayed a

white flag in front of their homes. "We're not interested in a Tamil homeland or separation or anything like that," another man said. "If the army can provide everything we need, we can live happily with them."

All traces of the Tamil Tigers' former administration were gone. The wooden placards, gaily painted with slogans and rebel gunmen proudly silhouetted against rainbow skies, had been shot to pieces. A bored government soldier on street patrol had been exercising his rifle on a two-dimensional enemy. The real Tamil Tigers had fled before the troops arrived to take the town last December.

Perhaps not all: two women said their relatives had been arrested by the security forces as suspected Tigers. "My two sons have been captured by the army. They had nothing to do with the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam]. But now I don't know where they've gone to," one said. "I've got a letter asking for my son's release," the other said. "But every time I go to the police station they make some excuse and I have to go away again."

The government says that if rebels have infiltrated the civilian population they will be treated fairly, provided certain conditions are met. "One, give up the separatist sympathies; fire; three, change psychologically and join the mainstream. That's all we're asking," Brig Munasinghe said. But in a place held by the Tigers for six years it would be unusual for any family to be entirely free of separatist sympathies; and for the government to gain real control of the people some of their demands will have to be met.

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De Klerk takes a risk in opposition

South Africa faces the danger of increased racial polarisation, writes David Beresford

THE National Party's decision to withdraw from South Africa's coalition government marks the beginning of a new political dispensation. But there are few signs that the dispensation will work, if it works at all.

The Nationalists' move has a logic which gives the lie to any talk of crisis. From the time they collected their joint Nobel peace prize, F.W. de Klerk and Nelson Mandela have been the oddest of odd couples, locked in a marriage of convenience which was bound to fall in time. In the end, damaging speculation against the rand dictated the timing of the breach.

Superficially, the Nationalists gain from the move. Mr de Klerk's declaration yesterday that he was "raring to go as the leader of the opposition" sounded genuine and was certainly understandable when one considers the repeated humiliations he has suffered at the hands of the president.

It is well-timed for them. Mr De Klerk can now claim to have done his bit for national unity and, for all his complaints, he has come away from the transition with a constitution which can only be seen as advantageous to an opposition. But his prediction that the Nationalists would go on to become "the largest party in South Africa" is disingenuous.

Arguably the most serious mistake made by the Nationalists in the transition has been their failure to renounce, if not reincarnate, themselves. There is possibly room for some improvement in their existing support-base, among the Coloureds. Ironically, it is the failure to renounce to which they once belonged and those whites who have satiated themselves with the novelty of voting for a black government.

But while the "Nats" have long heeded a formidable electioneering machine, their propaganda can be no match for the findings elicited by Archbishop Desmond Tutu's Truth Commission as it roams the country, hearing a

Overcrowded Somali boats capsize on Yemen crossing

Owen Bennett Jones in Geneva

AT LEAST 60 Somali refugees trying to escape the fighting in the capital, Mogadishu, have been drowned in the past few weeks while attempting the hazardous sea crossing to Yemen.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees says the Somalis have been travelling in hopelessly overcrowded boats. Yemeni fishermen have told the UNHCR that bodies are regularly washed up on their shoreline.

In one incident, 125 Somalis were crammed on to a small fishing boat with a maximum capacity of 35. Surviving passengers say two died of thirst while still on board.

More were killed when the captain and crew pushed people overboard, telling them to swim nearby to two men on the Yemeni coast.

Eventually the captain agreed to take the boat closer to the shore, but it was hit by a wave, capsized and sank. The UNHCR says at least 45 people died; survivors say the true figure is closer to 100.

The UNHCR believes the transport of refugees is being organised by Somali nationalists in the northern town of Bossaso. Those wanting to cross to Yemen are asked to pay between \$25 and \$30.

A UNHCR spokesman, Rupert Colville, has warned of further tragedies: "If the security situation in Mogadishu remains bad, others will be exposed to similar risks due to stormy seas, overcrowding and ruthless actions by boat crews."

Over 5,000 people have successfully completed the voyage since February. The journey from northern Somalia to Yemen takes about 48 hours.

The Yemeni authorities have said they will step up naval patrols in an attempt to avert more disasters. There are now 11,000 registered Somali refugees in Yemen.

Complaint from Mr M M Lilley - Summary of adjudication

The Broadcasting Complaints Commission have upheld a complaint from Mr Mike Lilley about an edition of Kilroy broadcast on BBC1 on 24 March 1995. The programme, entitled Missing Mothers, focused on the problems faced by children whose mothers had left them. Mr Lilley, a single-parent father, and his three children were among the studio guests.

Mr Lilley said that he had been led to expect that the programme would be well-balanced and would give a positive picture of single-parent fathers. Instead, it had concentrated on the highly emotional testimony of women who had undergone considerable suffering, including abuse by fathers, as a result of their mothers having left them as children. This had caused Mr Lilley's children unnecessary trauma.

The BBC acknowledged that the programme had generated much more emotion than they had foreseen. They apologised for any unintentional distress which this might have caused Mr Lilley's children but denied that he had been misled.

In the Commission's view, the programme centred so strongly on the women's harrowing experiences as to be quite different from what Mr Lilley had been led to expect, and indeed caused his children unnecessary distress. They can well believe that he would not have agreed to their participation if he had known that it would turn out to be so upsetting. In all the circumstances, the Commission find that the programme was unfair to both him and his children.

You can get a copy of the full adjudication by sending a stamped addressed envelope to: The Broadcasting Complaints Commission, 5-8 The Sanctuary, London SW1P 4JS.

Diary Matthew Norman

AFRODEUR (or brof-... to use the technical Yiddish term) has developed between the Diary and Mandy Mandelson. What caused it, I have no idea...

NO such amnesia afflicts Tory MP Sir Anthony Grant. He has recorded £13,000 in income from insurance firm Bowring Marsh and McLennan...

LOOK forward to Fay Weldon's critique of the new Jeffrey Archer in the Sunday Times, the paper with its own official code to ensure objectivity among book reviewers...

WHAT a swell party it will be tonight when Gentleman Charlie Wilson opens his gracious Kensington home to survivors of his Independent editorship...

WARM congrats, meanwhile, to Charlie's boss David Montgomery for the fantastic scoop in yesterday's Mirror. The paper snapped its recent libel complaint against Alison...

IN today's reading from Major, Major (Memories Of An Older Brother), we find Terry Major-Bell returned from National Service. The heading of Chapter 8, 'Jack the Lad', speaks for itself...

CORNISH china firm J&S Chown has a new commemorative mug. On one side it shows Charles and Diana looking away from each other...



Beware the turning tide of freedom

Commentary Peter Preston

IT was the perfect British definition of a non-event: World Press Freedom Day, virtually unmentioned in any newspaper near you...

other non-event. I have the library file on the Council open in front of me. Nobody writes much about its deliberations any longer. They used to, from 1989 on — in London — when Britain helped construct the first democratic talking shop for a ravaged continent...

When Russia got its Council place a few months ago, Hugo Young took a cleaver to Malcolm Rifkind's cynicism — undermining the European Court of Human Rights for cheap Tory cheers back home. But such cynicism stretches even further than a court under siege...

abolishing Zagreb city council too. The use of "economic" or "environmental" inspectors against the press is standard stuff. It lends a little argumentative distance to old-fashioned repression. It is Eastern Europe's gambit of the year...

Strasbourg this summer to discuss "rules on the printing and circulation of newspapers" and "rules on access to the journalistic profession". But the nature of the issues has been changing. The oldest trick in the book, for instance, is a State-authorized list of "approved professional journalists"...

The oldest trick is a State-authorized list of 'approved' journalists

France and Germany and Britain ever combine to suspend Russian membership? If that is pragmatically unthinkable, can smaller nations behaving badly — increasingly a critical mass — be brought to equitable book?

Jack and John discover the magic of hugs



Bel Littlejohn

DEEP breath. And out. Once more. Deep breath. And out. Hmmm. Relax. There! Feels better already. You're not looking your best. Are you feeling terribly depressed? Are you? Super! Tell us what's on your mind and we'll all have a jolly good natter...

With a hold group of other warmhearted women, including the lovely Carmen (Calli) and Pat (Gawit), I am a founder member of Antidote, the organisation that is determined to make our elected politicians get in touch with their deeper feelings...

Jack Straw, for instance, I know Jack won't mind me saying that he used to be just a little bit rigid, a little bit manly, a little bit "buttoned-up". Years ago, back in the days when he played bass in Hawkwind, he would only ever go on stage if a woolly and waterproof were to hand...



It won't go away

Chris Smith's welfare plans are fine in the long-term, argues Roy Hattersley, but the poor still need help now. And to pay for it? Higher tax is an option

DO not believe that, in the words of the Guardian headline, we are witnessing "the end of the welfare state". In Chris Smith's Tuesday lecture Social Justice In A Modern World — the call to make the leap from welfare to work was more than a plausible excuse for cutting public expenditure. Promises about limiting government spending are an indispensable part of any New Labour statement. But Smith's real theme was the need to give dignity as well as material help to people described by the London Evening Standard (of all papers) as "the alienated, desperate, barely literate under-class which has been left to moulder without hope at the bottom of the social barrel"...

work for 10 years that he must "abandon the assumption that the state is the best provider". If, as Smith hopes, "each man and woman [is to be] assured of sufficient income for honourable subsistence", immediate help has to be provided in the old-fashioned way. I am strongly in favour of the major surgery which Smith proposes. But I have 20,000 constituents in urgent need of first aid. The problem is administering both remedies simultaneously. "The best possible way to reduce the bill for the taxpayer," said Smith, "is to have as many people as possible to come off benefits altogether". Right. It is the best way because it is the way which most quickly and effectively reduces poverty. Apart from the freezing months of the 1947 fuel crisis, the post-war Labour government never allowed unemployment to rise above 400,000 — a figure far lower than either Beveridge or the 1942 White Paper thought possible. The social effect was immediate. The Rowntree survey into poverty in York recorded that, in 1938, 31 per cent of families lived on or below subsistence levels. The principal cause was unemployment. By 1950 only 3 per cent of York families lived in poverty. There is still disagreement...

about whether the transition from war to peacetime competition helped or hindered Attlee in reducing unemployment to so low a figure. It is, however, certain that what old Labour achieved in 1945 will be almost impossible for New Labour to repeat in 1997. The techniques — these days called controls and regulations — are either out of fashion or made impossible to operate by the need to survive in a global market. Rightly or wrongly, Gordon Brown will not subsidise barely viable steel-plants or persuade the electricity-generating industry to use British coal rather than the cheaper Polish equivalent — even though, on the basis of Chris Smith's benefit balance sheet, it would probably be a good deal for the taxpayer. Just as important, the psychology of unemployment has changed — at least for many of the men and women who, as Chris Smith rightly says, have been demeaned by a lifetime of welfare dependency. A young man who leaves school at 16 and wanders around street corners for the next 10 years is neither mentally equipped nor technically qualified to take on one of the new jobs which will eventually result from a high-investment economy. For his sake — and for the sake of his children — I am prepared to persuade him, with a little gentle coercion, that work is better than inactivity. But the work is a different, more central place in his being — Michael, you'll remember, had just lost a court case to prove he was working-class, even though he'd invested in a brand new flat cap and a jar of Sarson's Malt Vinegar as well as undergoing extensive training in thumb-rope signs. But DNA testing will out. Poor guy, what he needed was a jolly good boo-hoo followed by a lovely warm hug under controlled conditions. Susie was just the person to give it to him. She also gave him a mantra to recite in moments of stress. "I may not be working class but I'm still Michael. Meacher and I love myself." he would whisper when the going got rough. And that's how he got where he is today: one of our most memorable Opposition Spokesmen for (Not to Bole) Lock In (Premierary) H'book and Fill In (Gay Traxx, Bel) in recent history. Anyway, when Michael introduced me to Susie, my first reaction was, boogie on down, Bel! Translated into English that means we just clicked. She put into words something I had always thought let's get in touch with our feelings — a message I had been struggling towards in my Orange-award-winning Fluffy the Dolphin children's books. And since knowing Susie, I have made that message all the more forceful — see Fluffy Opens Up (1994), Fluffy Is A Strong Dolphin (1995) and Fluffy Learns To Love Himself (1996).

children — I am prepared to persuade him, with a little gentle coercion, that work is better than inactivity. But the work is a different, more central place in his being — Michael, you'll remember, had just lost a court case to prove he was working-class, even though he'd invested in a brand new flat cap and a jar of Sarson's Malt Vinegar as well as undergoing extensive training in thumb-rope signs. But DNA testing will out. Poor guy, what he needed was a jolly good boo-hoo followed by a lovely warm hug under controlled conditions. Susie was just the person to give it to him. She also gave him a mantra to recite in moments of stress. "I may not be working class but I'm still Michael. Meacher and I love myself." he would whisper when the going got rough. And that's how he got where he is today: one of our most memorable Opposition Spokesmen for (Not to Bole) Lock In (Premierary) H'book and Fill In (Gay Traxx, Bel) in recent history. Anyway, when Michael introduced me to Susie, my first reaction was, boogie on down, Bel! Translated into English that means we just clicked. She put into words something I had always thought let's get in touch with our feelings — a message I had been struggling towards in my Orange-award-winning Fluffy the Dolphin children's books. And since knowing Susie, I have made that message all the more forceful — see Fluffy Opens Up (1994), Fluffy Is A Strong Dolphin (1995) and Fluffy Learns To Love Himself (1996).

Electoral Reform Society and Democratic Left present a Voting Reform Group event... CAUSING A STORM FOR REFORM. SPEAKER: DAVID MARQUAND. Followed by panel discussion on campaigning for change with Charles Kennedy MP (Liberal Democrat), Sir David Keir MP (Conservative), Tony Wright MP (Labour), Urs Bellone (Friends of the Earth), Lindsey Coles (Charter 88), and Jean Lambert (Green Party). HOSTS: Barbara Smead (Electoral Reform Society) and Nina Temple (Democratic Left). 7.30pm Monday 13 May. Corway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1. Admission £5/£3 concessions. All proceeds to Voting Reform Group. Doors open 6.30pm for stalls and refreshments. Nearest tube: Holborn. Tickets available on the door or for reservations phone 0171-578 4448 or 0171-588 1622. Voting Reform Group is made up of groups who have come together to campaign for a change in the voting system — including Charter 88, Friends of the Earth, Democratic Left, Electoral Reform Society, Labour Campaign for Electoral Reform, Conservative Action for Electoral Reform, Green Party, Methodist Church (DSE), United Reformed Church, Action Church Together in Scotland, as well as MPs from the Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat and Plaid Cymru parties. VRG is circulating the 'Sign up for a Change' petition demanding a referendum on the voting system for Westminster, this will be presented to Parliament after the next General Election.

g film
people

Friday May 10 1996

Recession in factories despite spree, page 12

Capital Radio investigates Indian airwaves page 12

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Financial Editor: Alex Brummer
Telephone: 0171-239-9610
Fax: 0171-833-4456

Finance Guardian

Labour attacks Trade Secretary for failing to deliver guidelines on electricity sector takeover bids

Lang accused of muddle

Nicholas Bammler
Technology Editor

THE Trade and Industry Secretary Ian Lang yesterday delivered a vigorous defence of his decisions on takeovers of privatised utilities but failed to lay down clear guidelines on what bids would be allowed.

Mr Lang used a keynote speech at an Adam Smith Institute conference on the utilities to counter increasing political pressure over his attitude towards utility takeovers.

However shadow energy secretary John Birt claimed later that the minister had done nothing to settle the confusion in the electricity sector.

restructuring of the electricity industry in which consumers are barely an afterthought... There is still no sign of a strategy.

strong competition has developed to supply larger industrial and commercial customers. We are working towards opening the household energy market fully to competition in 1998.

is the experience of a demanding competitive market at home," he said.

Notebook

Sceptics threaten City dominance



Edited by Alex Brummer

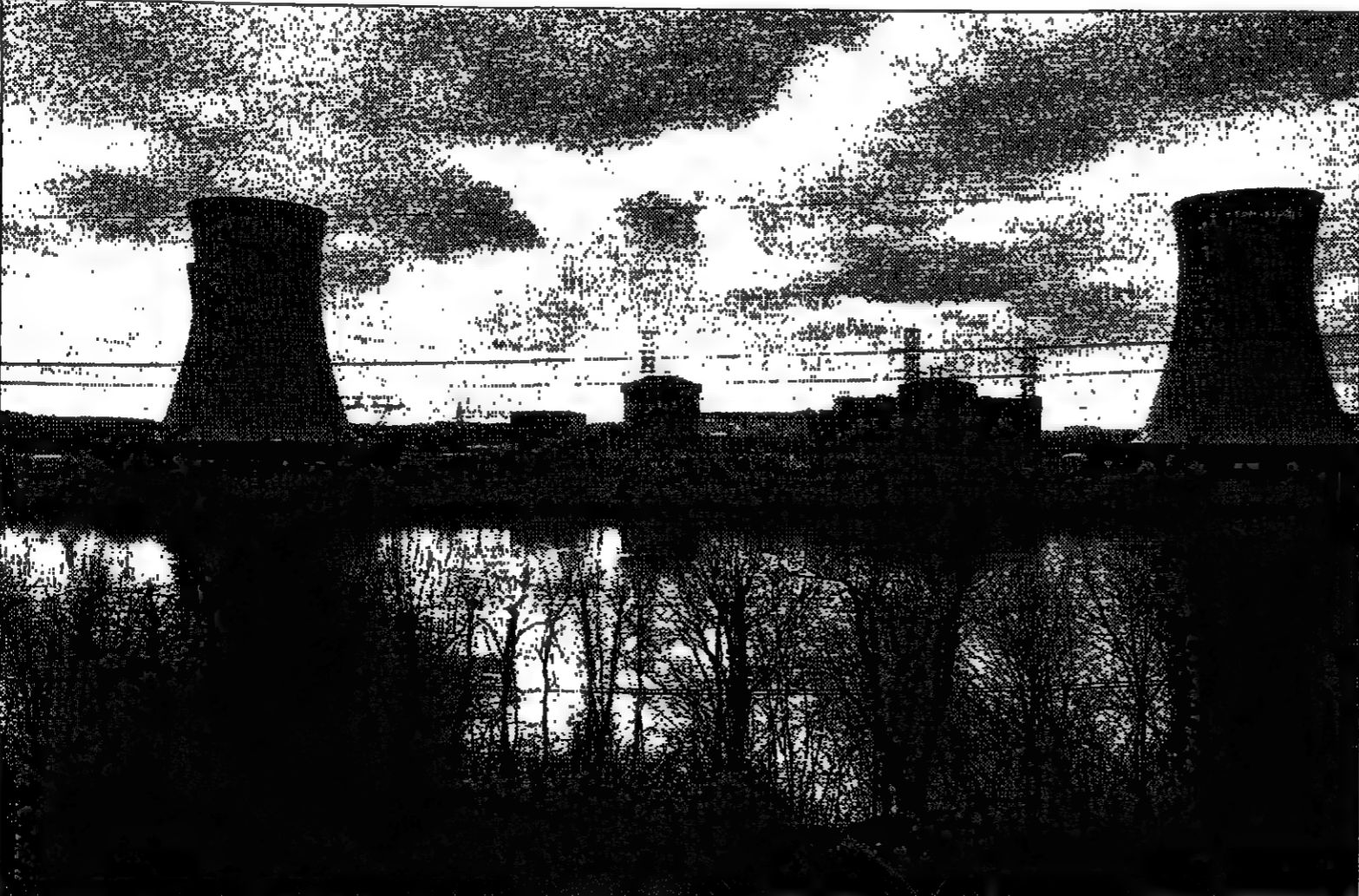
THERE has been so much focus of late on deals within our own financial sector that it would be easy to miss the broader changes across the European union.

right, in the shape of John Redwood and Norman Lamont, and caved in. Similarly, there are good strategic reasons why the Government should hang on to its golden shares in the power generators, but they have much more to do with the UK's energy security than with competition policy.

BA has all but mopped up many of the competitors from British Caledonian to Dan Air; BT still has some 80 per cent of the UK telecoms market and British Steel is a dominant player in the European sector.

The implementation, for instance, of the European passport, which makes it easier to bank across national boundaries, has led to 178 applications - of which the UK has received 24, just ahead of Germany.

Rand retreat
WIDESPREAD hopes that the South African model of market orientated economic policies would be a boon for the whole of southern Africa will be blunted by the latest extraordinary political developments.



Hot property... Legal fallout from the Three Mile Island disaster still haunts GPU, a partner in the Midlands Electricity deal PHOTOGRAPH BY DENIS THORPE

US predators become a power in the land

Gregory Palast on the motives of utilities targeting UK

TWO American utilities which have announced a \$1.73 billion agreement to buy Midlands Electricity have a history of losing costly battles with US regulators and consumer organisations.

late that the company values these assets at \$1.5 billion (\$1 billion) above market value.

Ohio state government's effort to save CINCERGY from insolvency in the 1980s. He questions the utility's management philosophy.

their roots in the financial catastrophe known as Black Monday. On January 21, 1984, CINCERGY, then with the more prosaic name of Cincinnati Gas and Electric, halted construction of the Zimmer nuclear plant, although 97 per cent complete.

Overall, the group's pre-tax profits, after allowing for restructuring costs, rose from \$375.5 million to \$404 million. The underlying profits growth before the Manweb provision was from \$380.1 million to \$477 million.

Raiders zap Sony's video game battle base

JAPANESE anti-monopoly officials raided the headquarters of Sony Corporation's video game unit yesterday.

month, seeking to recapture Nintendo's falling market share. Nintendo used to have 90 per cent of the Japanese video game market but this has dropped to about 40 per cent since Sony and Sega challenged with 32-bit technology in late 1994.

When it was established in 1981, Intrepreneur had 4,450 pubs from the GrandMet and Courage estates. But this has gradually been whittled down as the debt-laden company sought to concentrate on the best pubs in its portfolio.

Intrepreneur sells 1,410 pubs in push for quality

INTREPRENEUR, the joint venture between Grand Metropolitan and the Australian company, Foster's Brewing Group, has sold a further 1,410 pubs for £262 million, reducing its estate to just under 3,000.

these pubs is another step in focusing Intrepreneur as a quality pub estate.

age, now Scottish Courage following the merger with Scottish & Newcastle.

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| Cyprus 0.8295 | India 52.38 | Norway 9.70 | Switzerland 121.00 |
| Denmark 8.88 | Ireland 0.8375 | Portugal 23.00 | Turkey 110.782 |
| Finland 7.14 | Israel 4.92 | Seoul 110.782 | USA 1.4850 |

Bonanza for the bus drivers with share in Glasgow sale

JUST over 3,000 Glaswegian bus drivers, conductors and mechanics are to share a bonanza of around £35,000 each, after FirstBus, Britain's second biggest bus operator, yesterday made a recommended £96 million offer for SBH, Glasgow's major bus operator.

cent stake in SBH. It has agreed to sell its shares to FirstBus, which it values in its books at £8.9 million, for £28.2 million.



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Long haul... A 72ft limousine which seats 38 people and bends in the middle for cornering has been completed by Ultra Kustom Coach of California. It was ordered by Sheikh Hamad Bin Hamdan Al-Nahyan of the United Arab Emirates to transport him and his entourage during visits to the United States. It cost \$1.2 million and will be available for rent when not in use by the sheikh

Retail sector reports new rush in high streets but tempo on production lines slows

Easter shopping spree revives hopes that recovery is in store

Richard Thomas
Economics Correspondent

AN EASTER shopping spree gave a fresh boost to Britain's high streets last month, rekindling hopes of a consumer-led economic revival during 1996, a survey published today shows.

Retailers enjoyed their busiest month for more than two years in April, according to the Confederation of British Industry's latest snapshot of shops and stores — easing fears that the new year pick-up in high street activity is running out of steam.

Alastair Eperon, chairman of the CBI's Distributive Trades Panel, hailed the fig-

ures. "It is encouraging that the increase in sales volumes in March were carried through into April," he said.

Responding to the CBI's monthly poll of 16,000 shops and stores, 49 per cent of high street outlets said trade was brisker last month than in the same period last year, compared with 17 per cent reporting that sales had dropped.

The gap of 32 percentage points between these two figures was sharply up on the 27-point difference reported in March — and the highest since December 1993, the CBI said.

Mr Eperon said the high street pick-up was set to continue, but warned that predictions by shops that sales would rise sharply in the

spring might prove to be over-optimistic.

"Retailers are confident sales trade will pick up further in May, but the experience of the last two months suggests the pace of growth may be more modest than they currently expect," he said.

The retailers' positive outlook is good news, however, for suppliers, who saw the volume of orders placed rise to its highest level since the end of 1993. Wholesalers also reported a sharp pick-up in sales.

Only motor traders said it was a gloomy month, with respondents saying that sales were flat in April after steady growth in the first three months of the year — despite

upbeat figures for car sales published last week.

The CBI said the recovery in vehicle sales was erratic and anecdotal evidence suggests that car sales varied by region, so that some areas could be accounting for most of the sales, leaving other parts of the country in the doldrums.

On the high street, clothing and footwear stores saw a marked pick-up in business in April as consumers flocked to buy warm-weather clothes. Off-licences benefited from growing demand for cool drinks, while book shops and stationers recorded weaker growth in sales.

Household-related spending also jumped, with furniture and carpet shops, along with

hardware, china and DIY stores, recording a bumper month, according to the CBI survey.

A CBI economist said that although people might not be ready to move house, some families could be investing in existing property — possibly with an eye to a future sale.

Figures from the Department of the Environment published yesterday confirmed that higher house prices had not yet pushed up the rate of house-building. In March construction began on 14,800 houses, against 16,300 in the same month last year.

Housing starts in the first quarter of 1996 were unchanged on the preceding three months, while completions dropped by 5 per cent.

Factory figures 'show need for rate cut'

Sarah Ryan

PRESSURE on Chancellor Kenneth Clarke to revive the flagging factory sector with an interest rate cut strengthened last night as official figures showed that manufacturing has slid into recession.

Manufacturing output fell by 0.2 per cent in the three months to March, dragging down the performance of the industrial sector as a whole.

Most of headline increase

— also 0.2 per cent — was in the electricity, gas and water industries, where Government officials and City analysts said, the unusually cold start to the year boosted demand.

The Office for National Statistics, which published the March production data yesterday, estimated that total industrial output would remain flat in the coming months.

Despite a rise — again of 0.3 per cent — in manufacturing output in March against

February, the three-monthly figure was regarded by officials as more reliable. The quarterly fall was the second in a row, provoking City warnings that recent optimism about Britain's economic performance was premature.

HSBC economist Ian Shepherdson said: "Looking ahead, recent survey evidence points to stagnation at best, with a real chance of further falls in output as firms run down their excess stocks. This performance is not good

enough for the Government. It points to increased pressure for lower rates."

Nikko economist Simon Briscoe said: "An increasingly strong case can be put that the economy is in danger of drifting back into recession. If the recovery fails to take hold, rates will be cut."

There were signs that factories have been reducing their excess stocks in the first three months of the year more quickly than officials had anticipated, so that demand was being met from

over-full shelves rather than from production lines.

An improvement in demand for consumer goods — further evidence of the two-sided story of the economy's health — was reported. Durable goods, which include items like washing machines, televisions and cars, rose by 1.7 per cent in the three months to March. But this category accounts for only 6 per cent of the overall manufacturing sector. This was pulled down by falls in capital and intermediate goods.

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Belgians seek Dassault boss over bribery allegations

Julie Wolf in Brussels

THE Belgium authorities have issued an international arrest warrant for Serge Dassault, head of the French defence group, and the latest prominent figure to become embroiled in the country's long-running corruption scandal.

Belgian judicial sources said yesterday that evidence from Switzerland had led them to put out the warrant for Mr Dassault.

This latest move follows a Belgian parliamentary report last year that linked the Dassault group with a scandal involving payments to the Flemish Socialist Party in exchange for defence contracts. The scandal rocked Belgium's political establishment and led to a number of ministerial resignations.

The parliament heard allegations that Mr Dassault paid bribes of Fr10 million (€1.3 million) when Dassault Electronique secured a contract in 1989 to equip Belgian fighter planes with a sophisticated electronic system.

Mr Dassault, honorary chairman of the electronics company and chairman of Dassault Aviation, has consistently denied the allegations.

The Belgian parliamentary report also prompted the resignation of Willy Claes from his post as NATO secretary-general. Mr Claes, a Flemish socialist, was economic minister at the time the Dassault payments are said to have taken place.

The report also linked Mr Claes with alleged payments by Italian helicopter maker Agusta to the Flemish socialists in exchange for a military contract.

Mr Dassault yesterday denied involvement in the scandal and said that, fearing he might be put in jail, he had refused a request to answer questions in a Belgian court two weeks ago.

A series of bribery scandals in recent years have claimed the careers of more than half a dozen prominent Flemish and French socialists. Investigations into the Agusta affair were touched off by the still unexplained murder of Belgian socialist Andre Coolis in 1991.

Capital sniffs air in India after turning up volume at home

Outlook
Roger Cowe

NEW that Capital Radio is preparing to shatter the airwaves of Bombay and Delhi may fuel talk of cultural imperialism.

In fact, it is just another example of how Britain's commercial radio industry has grown up, and how maturing western industries seek continued growth by attempting to transplant their skills into developing economies.

Richard Eyre, Capital's managing director, announcing soaring half-year results, confirmed yesterday that the London-based company hopes to sign a deal with a joint-venture partner in India within months, although broadcasting depends on new legislation and is unlikely to begin much before 1999.

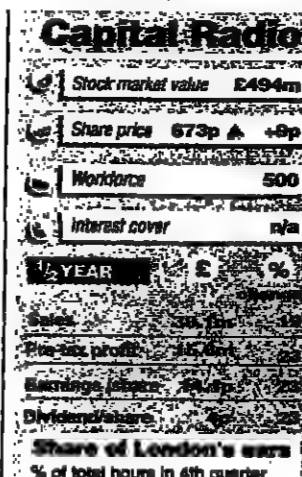
Mr Eyre also has an eye on other international possibilities, although New Zealand and South Africa have been rejected. "Barely a week goes by without someone bringing us a new opportunity."

He stressed that the company has not gone overboard on overseas expansion. "We will do it solely where we find an opportunity to enhance earnings," he said.

Indeed, Capital's new internationalism is matched by hyperactivity in the UK.

Despite its identification with London since the birth of commercial radio in 1973, Capital owns six other stations, including BRMB in Birmingham, Invicta in Kent and Fox in Oxford. Now it is bidding for licences in the East Midlands and in Yorkshire. Talk about cultural imperialism!

This is all part of an explosion which last year helped commercial radio overtake the BBC in terms of



food and drink usually considered the territory of visual media. But it is a cyclical business. This week's sale of Vivaldi — the women's-interest station launched last year — shows that success isn't automatic even in an expanding industry.

Capital went into the expansion in pole position, as the largest and first of the commercial stations. That is both positive and negative — competition is bound to reduce its share of the market, but the loyalty of such an established audience is hard for competitors to deflect.

The chart shows that the main FM station in London had fared reasonably well in the face of competition, but Capital Gold, which broadcasts on AM, has seen its share slip substantially. The company hopes to reverse that trend by winning a new FM licence which would become the new home for the classic pop station.

As a whole, Capital still has a strong hold over the capital's ears and a substantial lead over second-placed Virgin. But diversification is irresistible. Hence India and the decision to set up a Capital Radio Café on the ground floor of new premises in Leicester Square — when the company moves from the landmark Capital Tower. If it works it might be replicated in the company's other venues around the country.

Then there is the Internet. Every self-respecting media company is groping on to the net these days, and Capital hopes to have a web site before the end of the year. Mr Eyre believes it could become much more than a token presence.

"There could be an opportunity for us to move into classified advertising and into retailing. It would be making an intelligent use of our brand values."

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Racing

Wragg rules Prize out of the Derby

Chris Hawkins
THERE can be no complaints about Geoff Wragg's ability to win races with Prize Giving...



On the list... Oscar Schindler (centre) takes the Ormonde Stakes from Election Day and Minds Music PHOTOGRAPH BY GEORGE SELWYN

get a run, but finished fourth back in 1964 with Hul A Hul he has plenty of knowledge and experience to back up such an assertion...

No one could accuse Michael Stouts, his trainer, of lacking ambition with this colt and there are plenty of trainers who could have made hay in the complicated pitting him against group race rivals...

Carlisle

2.10 Recondite 2.40 Just Bob 3.10 Birchwood Sun

Beverly

2.30 Irish Flute 2.35 King's Trainers 2.50 Strategic Play

Beverly

2.30 Irish Flute 2.35 King's Trainers 2.50 Strategic Play

Market Rasen (N.H.) tonight

6.00 Silcock Game 6.55 Peckle Green

Race card for Carlisle featuring various races like 2.10 Recondite, 2.40 Just Bob, 3.10 Birchwood Sun, etc.

Race card for Beverly featuring various races like 2.30 Irish Flute, 2.35 King's Trainers, 2.50 Strategic Play, etc.

Race card for Market Rasen (N.H.) tonight featuring various races like 6.00 Silcock Game, 6.55 Peckle Green, etc.

SPORTS NEWS 13

Lingfield with Jackpot form

Table of Lingfield race results and form, including sections for 1.50 Major Dances, 2.50 Cavalry Parade, and 3.50 Scottish Royal.

Table of Lingfield race results and form, including sections for 2.20 Racing Channel, 2.50 Bollerig Handicap, and 3.20 Booker Cash.

Table of Lingfield race results and form, including sections for 4.00 Major Dances, 4.50 Cavalry Parade, and 5.50 Scottish Royal.

Table of Lingfield race results and form, including sections for 6.00 Major Dances, 6.50 Cavalry Parade, and 7.50 Scottish Royal.

Table of Lingfield race results and form, including sections for 8.00 Major Dances, 8.50 Cavalry Parade, and 9.50 Scottish Royal.

Table of Lingfield race results and form, including sections for 10.00 Major Dances, 10.50 Cavalry Parade, and 11.50 Scottish Royal.

Advertisement for 'off to Paris' featuring a race card for Beverly, Carlisle, Lingfield, Stratford, and MKT RASEN.

Stratford National Hunt evening card

Race card for Stratford National Hunt evening featuring various races like 6.45 Barstone, 6.55 Potter's Bay, 7.10 Coull d'Estival, etc.

Results

Table of racing results for various events including Chester, Brighton, and Southwell.



United's tragic Busby Babes before the Munich air crash in 1958... left to right, Wood, Edwards, Taylor, Whelan, Bent, Foulkes, Blanchflower, Webster, Violet, Colman and Berry

United await the final analysis

David Lacey compares the current Old Trafford team with some legendary forebears ahead of a date with destiny at Wembley

SUPERLATIVES abound when Doubles are around, and if Manchester United become the first club to repeat the feat of winning League and FA Cup in the same season, they will no doubt be hailed as the greatest English team of all time, or certainly the best ever to come out of Old Trafford.

Should Liverpool be beaten at Wembley tomorrow it will be hard to argue with the statistics. Alex Ferguson's United have just won their third Premier League title in four years and are about to appear in their third successive Cup final, a feat achieved only by Arsenal and Everton this century.

But the best ever? Surely not, or at least not yet. The Leeds United side that won the championship in 1973-74 and various Liverpool teams of the late Seventies and almost the entire Eighties were better in certain fundamental respects.

The Leeds team of Billy Bremner, Paul Madeley and Peter Lorimer, with Johnny Giles still playing a part, was the culmination of 10 years' work under Don Revie. Its passing and movement have rarely been bettered.

The Liverpool side of Kevin Keegan and Steve Heighway, surprisingly beaten by Manchester United in the 1977 Cup final, had already won the league and went on to win the European Cup four days later. Liverpool won three more European Cups, a feat that few other clubs have achieved.

Manchester United's following can argue with more justification, that within the confines of Old Trafford history the team they have watched this season has few peers. Only those of a certain age are in a position to disagree because here we are talking eras.

Soccer QPR owner steps down

CHARIS WRIGHT, the millionaire owner of the record company Chrysalis and owner of Sheffield Sharks basketball club, emerged last night as the favourite to buy Queens Park Rangers.

He stepped down from the QPR board to be replaced by the football administration manager Clive Bevil and Alan Eddowes, who doubles as general manager and safety officer at Loftus Road. Financial matters at Rangers will be dealt with by the board rather than the Thompson family.

McStay pulls out of Euro '96

GOIN JESS, the Coventry midfielder, was called into the Scotland squad preparing for Euro '96 yesterday after Paul McStay was forced to withdraw with an ankle injury.

Craig Brown, the manager, was disappointed by McStay's withdrawal, especially as there was little hint that he would not make it to England in June. "I can't quantify the size of the loss," he said. "He's one of our most creative players and our second top scorer with nine goals."



United 1948 vintage... Johnny Carey holds the FA Cup



United 1970 vintage... George Best in his prime giving Cup rivals Ipswich the run around

The cream of the best

David Lacey's dream team:
Peter Schmeichel; Johnny Carey; Merrin Buchan; Alan Hogg; George Best; Bryan Robson; Bobby Charlton; Ryan Giggs; Eric Cantona; Denis Law.

Wonder boy is happy playing the father figure

Michael Walker talks to one of United's elder statesmen, 22-year-old Ryan Giggs

THE long peak of his grey baseball cap may have been pulled halfway down his face, but there was no mistaking the dark shining eyes that darted sheepishly underneath it.

More confident. Though he added, "I still have to ask permission. Everything's got to go through the manager." Giggs revealed that he and "a few of the young lads" had received training in coping with the attention and he thought Alex Ferguson was right in protecting the new boys' list as he has shielded Giggs.

Of his own celebrity status Giggs said: "It's not a problem. I've got used to it now, it didn't just happen overnight. Because it's in the team it's gradually grown over the last few years, so I haven't had to cope with it coming on suddenly. It is probably a lot more intensified off the pitch now. Since Sky has come in there

are a lot more players doing things off the pitch and as long as you realise that football is your career, then it isn't a problem. You can enjoy it, getting away from football, but like any other player, you've got to be careful where you go and what you do outside football.

Last year was not so good for Giggs and niggling injuries meant he played a lot of games unfit and watched the Cup final from the bench. But having already won the title this season United are looking forward to exorcising the ghost of Everton at Wembley 12 months ago, although they respect Liverpool's quality.

Giggs's only regret of a fine season is that Wales have not qualified for Euro '96, particularly as it is being staged in England. "To be a world-class player you have got to be recognised on the European Championship stage or the World Cup stage and I am more determined than ever to get to a World Cup or European Championship."

Results

Soccer

ENGLISH LEAGUE

Second Division

Bradford 11, York 10 (3-2)
Mansfield 19, Hull 54, Southampton 56, 2, 106
BOTTOM FIVE P, W, D, L, F, A, Pts
York 46, 13, 13, 21, 58, 73, 8
Cardiff 46, 13, 21, 57, 72, 48
Gillingham 46, 11, 14, 21, 42, 79
Burton Albion 46, 10, 26, 46, 69, 40
Millwall 46, 8, 16, 25, 36, 78, 31

1996 LEAGUE CUP

Sheff Wed 1, Luton 1, 1-0 (Pen)
Sheff Wed 1, Luton 1, 1-0 (Pen)

AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION

First Division: Luton 4, Millwall 0
Second Division: Luton 4, Millwall 0

Rugby Union

IRVING VALLEY FLOODLIGHT CUP

Leeds 38, Bath 13, 19-15 (12-12)
Leeds 38, Bath 13, 19-15 (12-12)

GAULISH

Leeds 38, Bath 13, 19-15 (12-12)

Football

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS CUP

Real Madrid 1, Lazio 1, 1-0 (Pen)
Real Madrid 1, Lazio 1, 1-0 (Pen)

Baseball

NATIONAL LEAGUE

San Diego 5, Pittsburgh 4, 5-4 (9-10)
San Diego 5, Pittsburgh 4, 5-4 (9-10)

Ice Hockey

NHL

San Jose 5, Pittsburgh 4, 5-4 (9-10)
San Jose 5, Pittsburgh 4, 5-4 (9-10)

Table Tennis

WORLD CUP

China 3, Korea 2, 3-2 (5-3)
China 3, Korea 2, 3-2 (5-3)

Golf Pyman enjoys simple fare

David Davies in Madrid

THREE years ago Iain Pyman won the Amateur championship with a tried and trusted piece of timber, a persimmon driver. The weapon served him well throughout a distinguished amateur career that brought Walker Cup honours and an appearance at the Masters.

debut this week and has been tormented over a possible change of clubs - from those that gave him his amateur successes to a company presumably prepared to pay him. "I made myself ill making the decision," he said yesterday. "I had got to the stage where I was going to change, but then one last session changed my mind again."

Now he has gone back to the old technology. He has a custom-fitted persimmon with a steel shaft and yesterday it was the key component in a round of 66 that gave him the lead in the Spanish Open at Club de Campo.

One of the players who could not cope was Colin Montgomerie. "The greens seemed to have a mind of their own," he said. "It's a shame; they were soft, spongy, spiky and heel-privy."

Since reverting to wood that has happened more frequently and Pyman feels, with two top 10 finishes in his last three events, some good play is beginning to be rewarded.

Rugby Super League

All the latest News
0930 168+

General 970
Bradford 971
Leeds 972
St Helens 973
Warrington 974
Wigan 975
Wakefield 976

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Cricket

Tour match: Worcestershire v Indians

Hick 200 puts India in a spin

David Hoppe at Worcester

WHEN English cricket dares imagine life as it should be, Graeme Hick invariably plays the dominating innings worthy of his intrinsic talent, banishing all comers with disturbing ease.

tury of his career, 215 from 195 balls with 30 fours and six sixes, was an effortless destruction of an Indian attack inconvenienced by a dull pitch and a piercing north-easterly wind.

brought leg-side wickets in one-day cricket, and yesterday brought brief stalemate. Hirwani played his first Test for India for nearly five years last November.

County Championship: Surrey v Kent

Lewis gets his life back

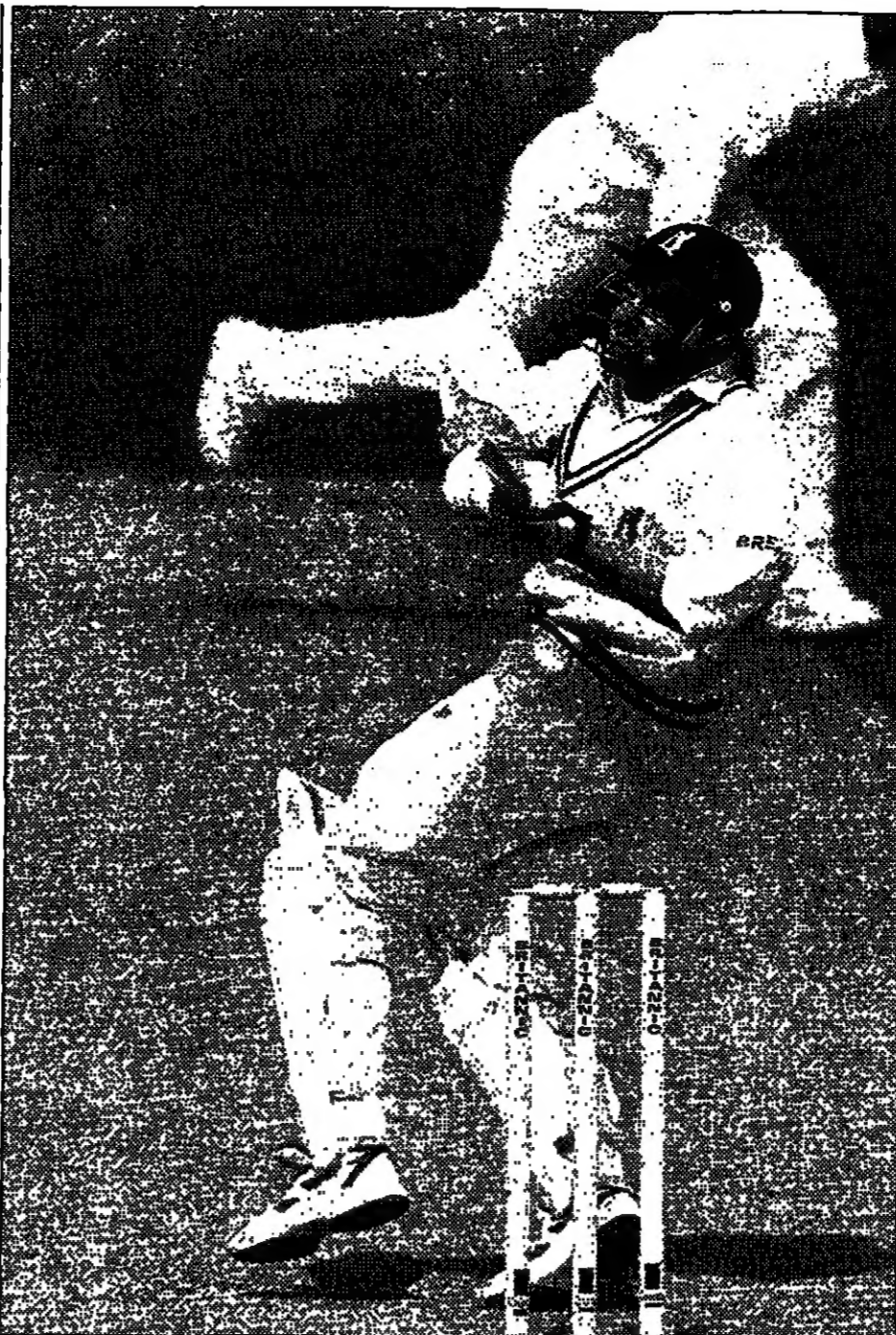
David Foot at The Oval

KENT'S batting was at times as wayward as the pigeons that insisted on nose-diving the fields or intrepidly stationing themselves in vast numbers at silly mid-off.

home is being acutely monitored, no doubt amid an equal proportion of hope and scepticism. He took two wickets, producing the best balls of the innings.

McGrath saves his best for the chairman

YORKSHIRE'S England A all-rounder Anthony McGrath chose a perfect if parky day to post his best County Championship score, getting out only nine short of his maiden century in front of the England chairman Ray Illingworth.



Twist and shout... Domink Ostler joins in the runmaking at Hove. PHOTOGRAPH: FRANK BAPTON

Sussex v Warwickshire

An ungentle Knight

Paul Weaver at Hove

AT TIMES the positivity of Warwickshire's cricket borders on affrontery. Dermot Reeve set his side the target of scoring 500 against his old county yesterday and he looked disappointed when they reached a paucity 494 for three.

Warwickshire are without the injured Tim Munton. Gladstone Small, Michael Bell and Andy Moles but seldom can any club have made such an emphatic start to the defence of the title.

the club he joined after the 1994 season is rubbing off. He will surely open for England this summer. After Wasim Khan was bowled at 83 it was something of a turkey-shoot — or, more accurately, a turkey-shoot — or, more accurately, a turkey-shoot.

Northamptonshire v Glamorgan

Warren digs in

Mike Selvey at Northampton

THE old football stands have gone and the County Ground prettied up, but when an erstwhile wind comes in like a switchblade it remains an unwelcome place. Apart from loamy Boxing Day matches on the Goodwin Sands, cricket was never meant to be played in such temperatures and it has been no surprise yesterday to see a St Bernard bringing out the drinks.

coming from Russell Warren with his second championship century after Richard Montgomery (51) and Alan Fordham (32) had seen the innings off to a flying start with an opening partnership of 105. With Warren was David Capel, who will resume today on 51, the fifth-wicket partnership worth 146.

Scoreboard

Britishic Assurance County Championship (Today: 11.0)

Northamptonshire v Glamorgan

Northamptonshire (494) have scored 494 for three against Glamorgan (1).

Warwickshire v Sussex

Warwickshire (494) have scored 494 for three against Sussex (1).

Surrey v Kent

Surrey (110) have scored 110 for five against Kent (2).

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Warwickshire v Sussex

Warwickshire (494) have scored 494 for three against Sussex (1).

Surrey v Kent

Surrey (110) have scored 110 for five against Kent (2).

Rugby

A match that could result in one game

Paul Fitzpatrick on the implications of the historic meeting between Wigan and Bath

JASON ROBINSON was one of the smallest men on the field in Wednesday night's cross-code challenge match between Wigan and Bath at Maine Road.

dering on being God-like. I would like Bath to do one rugby league training session a week. If we did that, we would be a far better side than we are at the moment."

Arguments about the games' respective merits, though, are merely diversions to the central theme. The important question is how significant was Wednesday's match to the future development of the two codes?

Such has been the pace of change over the last year, however, that he would probably agree that the possibilities are a very different view of the situation now. It is now possibly a question not of if but when.

There was a thankless task, playing an alien code after the leading practice sessions. But after a pasting in the first half, they showed themselves quick learners at the start of the second.

Jon Callard, their lone try scorer, yesterday seemed to signal the latter when he called for more cross-code matches. "Wigan were awesome. I had a huge amount of respect for them before the game but now they are boring on being God-like. I would like Bath to do one rugby league training session a week. If we did that, we would be a far better side than we are at the moment."

Britain's men's team remain anchored at the bottom of the rankings in the six-nation Sultan Azlan Shah tournament in Ipoh, Malaysia after losing 2-0 to South Korea, another of the countries who are in Britain's pool at the Atlanta Olympic Games, writes Pat Rowley.

Sport in brief

Tennis

Boris Becker's hopes of winning his first clay-court tournament were quashed yesterday when the former Wimbledon champion was outplayed by the Austrian Gilbert Schaller in the third round of the German Open in Hamburg.

Hockey

Garth Rees, Canada's World Cup captain, is returning to Wasps, his first club. The fly-half, a history master at Eton, has scored 370 points for Newport since.

Equestrianism

David McPherson, a Kent-based South African, won the Speed Classic on his 12-year-old Flip at the Royal Windsor Horse Show, writes John Kerr.

Rugby Union

London Broncos' captain Terry Matterson was last night banned for two matches. The Australian was sent off for a high tackle at Leeds last weekend.

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Cricket

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Table with 2 columns: Counties update, Complete county scores. Lists counties like Derbyshire, Durham, Essex, Glamorgan, Gloucestershire, Kent, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Middlesex, Northants, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Somerset, Surrey, Warwickshire, West Indies, Yorkshire and their scores.

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SportsGuardian

FA snub for fans in ticket scandal

Martin Thorpe and John Duncan on the controversy rocking Euro '96

THOUSANDS of supporters who paid for European Championship tickets will spend the next week waiting to discover if they are valid.

According to the Euro '96 tournament director Glen Kirton, "about 10,000 ticket applications are subject to investigation" after a police inquiry into unauthorised hospitality packages.

Their concern followed Wednesday's revelations that the FA's commercial director Trevor Phillips had left his job after allegedly being implicated in approving tickets for unauthorised companies.

Kirton believes the majority of applications for tickets, which are due to be delivered by the end of the month, will be cleared. But he warned fans: "We cannot accept responsibility for ascertaining whether they have bought a pup; whether they have gone to somebody who shouldn't be handing those tickets. So it's up to the person concerned to go and check that they are genuine."

Police have discovered various sources of suspect tickets. They are investigating a man who employed dozens of people to make personal applications before he sold them on abroad as hospitality packages.

Thirty bulk applications are also being investigated. Euro '96 is questioning the validity of applications which purport to be from football clubs or firms on an outing whose members say they want to sit together at games.

Another 15 bulk applications have already been found to be genuine, but the 30 have been given a week to prove they are genuine.

"We will not allow them to get the tickets to sell on as hospitality packages," said Kirton. "If we discover these bulk applications are fronts they won't get their tickets. Our sole aim is safety and security."

Euro '96 yesterday told those who phoned that they

will definitely receive tickets if they have booked them through the official ticket distributors Synchro, through the ticket hotline, or through Keith Frowse and Sportworld or their authorised subcontractors.

"Any supporter who said they got their tickets from another, unauthorised source was told: 'you'd better go back to them and check it,'" said Kirton.

Kirton admitted the whole episode was embarrassing. "It is embarrassing, because we supported the police operation and the first thing that has happened is that the name of a colleague has been mentioned," he said.

Investigating that has taken up time we should have spent getting on with organising the tournament.

Phillips is understood to have agreed a total of 2,000 tickets for three unauthorised companies.

Sieve Hamer, a director of one of those companies, the National Sporting Club, which received 1,100 tickets, said he met with Phillips last June.

"We had a lunch to explore the possibility of obtaining tickets for clients of the NSC at Euro '96. Mr Phillips said he was able to assist in this and we were put in touch with Synchro."

The NSC, of which the former Test cricketer Bob Willis is non-executive chairman, was given vouchers for 100 tickets for every game at Old Trafford and Wembley.

Euro '96 said yesterday that they would honour the agreements with NSC and the two other companies, Events International and Chas Wheeler. "If the National Sporting Club provides details of the individuals they are representing, subject to security checks we will send tickets directly to those individuals."

However, another director of the NSC, David Willis, when asked if he had threatened Euro '96 with legal action for the tickets, replied: "We pointed out the consequences of the failure to keep to their contract."

Hamer was arrested during a police raid on the NSC. Yesterday he said he "would be very surprised if we didn't take legal action" for wrongful arrest. The experience of the raid was "humiliating" and "demeaning", he said.

The Labour MP Kate Hoey yesterday asked the Minister for Sport if he plans to meet with the football authorities to discuss the ticket problems.

UNHAPPY FINISH FOR BRIGHTON AND KNIGHTON



Parting shot... York City won and avoided relegation in front of a small, resigned crowd at the Goldstone. FRANK BAPTON

York postscript dooms Carlisle

Tom Evans finds a chairman threatening legal action after a delayed execution

THE Carlisle chairman Michael Knighton will be taking legal advice this morning in his running battle with the Football League as the Cumbrian club yesterday returned to the Third Division from where they had emerged last season as champions.

York City, needing a point to avoid the drop at Carlisle's expense, won their rearranged match at Brighton 3-1. Knighton was among the 2,106 crowd at the Goldstone ground, and afterwards continued to blame the League for their handling of the affair.

The original match on April 27 had to be abandoned when angry Brighton fans invaded the pitch and tore down the goals. Brighton took no chances with yesterday's game, which was distinguished by what looked like the highest steward/spectator ratio in soccer history.

Carlisle insist that York were handed an unfair advantage, given that they were the only team in the country who went into their final league game knowing what result was required of them.

Knighton had no complaints, though, about Brighton's efforts. "In the first half Brighton didn't lie down," he said, "but they didn't have everything at stake as York did."

Craig Maskell, in fact, gave Brighton the lead on 19 minutes with a swerving shot, but second-half goals

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Craig Maskell, in fact, gave Brighton the lead on 19 minutes with a swerving shot, but second-half goals

History ends with a bang from a gavel



Frank Keating

AS Jacqueline Onassis posthumously proved there is nothing like the sentimental perception of the end of an era to push up prices in the saleroom — so no end of inflated bids are expected tomorrow at Phillips's auction house in London when the late Brian Johnston's board of cricketing bits and pieces — "cricketana" — goes under the hammer.

"I suppose old Summers will be bidding for most of Johnners's junk," joked a friend yesterday. "Come again?" "Well, wasn't he one of the commentator's bereaved and beloved cronies referred to by Prime Minister Major on Johnston's death in 1994? You remember: 'Summers will never be the same'."

Besides Johnston's mostly knick-knack relics, the sale includes several hundred lots of serious cricketing memorabilia such as Spycricket, ancient Wisdens, G G Hearne's diaries of the MCC tour of South Africa in 1891-92 and, most collectible of all, the inscribed bat with which Don Bradman scored his 212 against England at Adelaide in 1937.

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bbider but not, alas, his famous co-responder shoes, which he always referred to as "my old brown-and-whiters".

The price of cricketana, as opposed to that of any other sport, has been a saleroom phenomenon over the past couple of decades. There is little sign of a slump. A leading collector is the journalist and author David Frith who says: "I have been expecting the bubble to burst for years, but it hasn't yet and prices are holding up remarkably on almost every front."

But Frith adds, with his engaging gloominess: "It's not a young man's fancy and, recently we have lost two devoted specialist collectors [Bob Jones and Don Rowan] and the rest of us are getting older by the day — so there is a distinct possibility that soon many more executors will be preparing to flood the market and there could be many more vendors than purchasers."

Among the pictures ready to be taken off the saleroom wall is a colour-photograph portrait of Johnston himself, hanging next to it — ironic ally for its life, being such different fellows, they never saw eye to eye — is a pencil-and-chalk portrait of the late John Arlott, to all intents the founder of the radio feast which the good Johnston tucked into with such relish in the latter part of his life.

AT Worcester yesterday we were reflecting on how the Johnston sale somehow closes a cultural chapter for sentimental Brits of a certain "wireless" age, just as the Onassis-Kennedy auction finally drew the curtain on the last vestiges of America's Camelot fable.

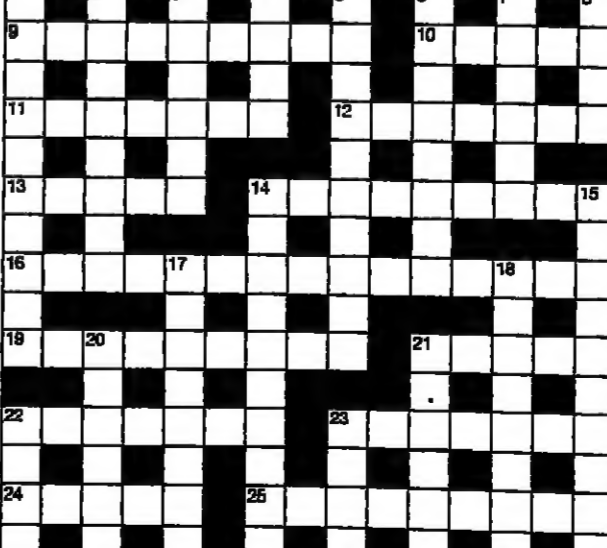
It was an appropriate place for such thoughts, as a half-century passage could be said to have started in the first days of May in 1946, at that very same wind-blown field at Worcester and, to complete the anniversary exactitude, with the Indians playing. For it was 50 years ago on May 4 1946 that Arlott made his first live cricket broadcast — for the Eastern section of the BBC World Service — when India began their tour on the traditional springtime sanctum alongside the silvery Severn.

In his autobiography, Basingstoke Boy, Arlott said that that auspicious day "had opened up a glimpse of high pleasure — watching cricket without undue work strain seemed, and continued to be for many years, happiness almost beyond belief."

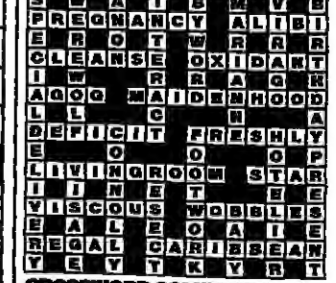
Fifty years on, almost to the day, Johnston's sale somehow ties up the whole story neatly, if dolefully. Summers just can't be the same.

Guardian Crossword No 20,649

Set by Custos



- Across**
- 9 Amuse, getting record thanks at home (9)
 - 10 Plant a kiss on cheek after getting ring (5)
 - 11 Pawnbroker, mostly when penny's beginning, is open (7)
 - 12 It isn't a top journalist that's corrupted (7)
 - 13 Hardy race pass into disuse, we hear (5)
 - 14 Why you and I will circle most of county town (9)
 - 16 Understand the sabre rattling, and gasp (5,4,6)
 - 19 Lobe needs patching up — result of a punch? (4-5)
 - 21 Part of flower pales, withering (5)
 - 22 Umbelliferous plant ripe leg when growing wild (7)
 - 23 Boxer, a merciful person? That's about right (7)
 - 24 Some more lift-off, in retrospect, is smoother perhaps (5)
 - 25 Place attracting moderate notoriety (5)
- Down**
- 1 Queen upset over mine host being anti-monarchist (10)
 - 2 Supply of soup makes family a lot of money (5-3)
 - 3,4 After interval rescals dismantles temporary dwellings (6,4)
 - 5 A French male's having pudding served up, without suffering strain (10)
 - 6 Active person around the pit to rule arbitrarily (8)
 - 7 British type of Bingo gets one helplessly drunk (6)
 - 8 Copied exercises in a day (4)
 - 14 Urge to travel gives staff an odd result (10)
 - 15 Enliven far wallowing in past enmity (10)



- 17** Exotic dance for which goddess circulates a taboo (8)
- 18** Current Primate captivates millions with passion (8)
- 20,21** Drunk's foolish excursion? It leads to vacillation (6-6)
- 22** Examine closely condition in carriage way (4)
- 23** See boor cry, left inside (4)

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The original paper



REPLA The first and still the best.

Handwritten text in Arabic script: "الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية"